



The Open Chess Book Collection

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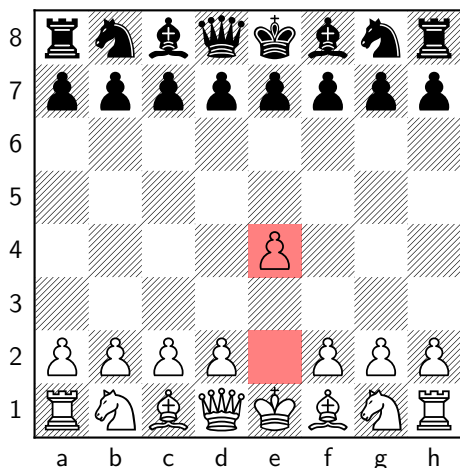
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Chapter 1

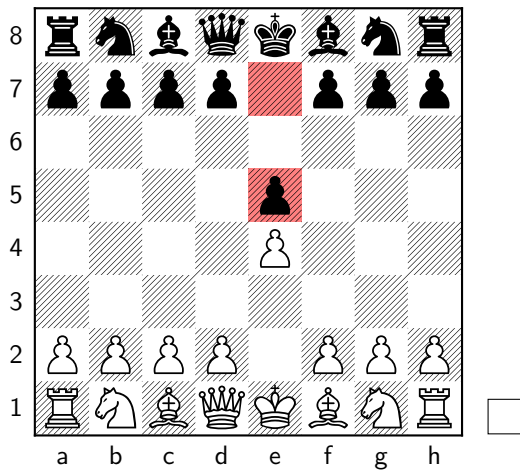
Stafford Gambit: Stafford Gambit accepted : Overview

1 e4

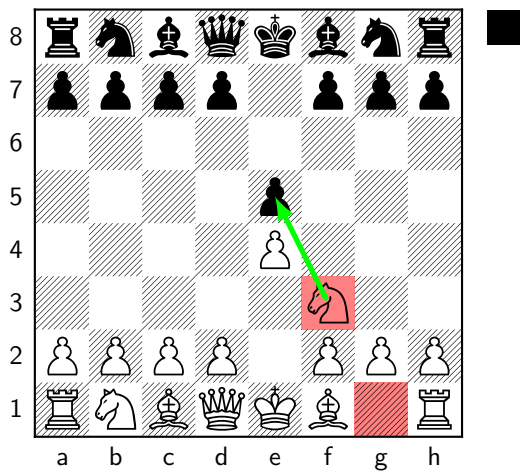


—Introduction— Hi everyone. I've created this study both for people who wish to try the stafford gambit as black and for people who want to learn how to response properly to this gambit. Be aware though that this opening is objectively unsound, and there are several ways to counter it with white and to get a significant advantage. If you play this opening you are essentially accepting a losing position in which you have to swindle your opponent to win. It's extremely fun but it's not a proper way to play chess. If you are a beginner player looking to build an aggressive repertoire as black against e4 this is not the way to do it. However it is still extremely tricky and it is extremely easy for white to go wrong while playing seemingly solid moves. It's a good surprise weapon for Blitz and bullet, especially if your main opening against e4 is the Petroff. I've incorporated ideas from Eric Rosen, Jonathan Schrantz, Daniel Naroditsky and others as well as ideas of my own. Currently this line is undergoing a boom in popularity on the internet and new variations and tricks are often found. So I'll try to keep this study updated. Don't forget to drop a like if you enjoyed it =)

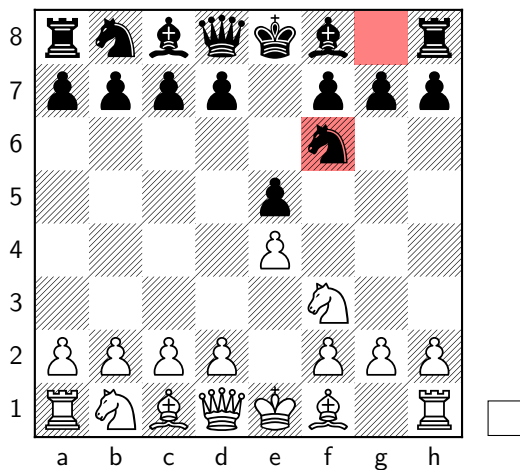
1...e5



2 ♖f3



2... ♖f6

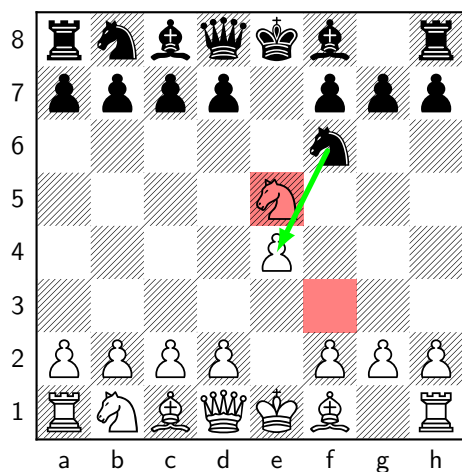


The Stafford Gambit is an e4-e5 opening that can occur in the russian game.

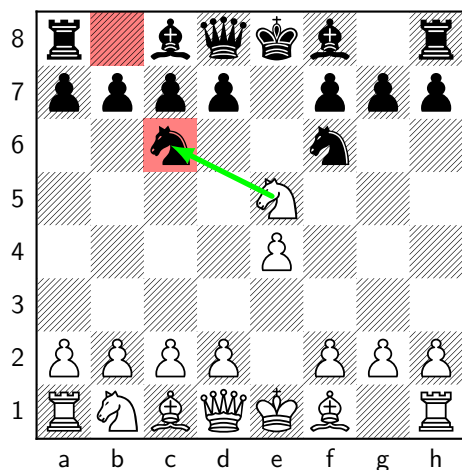
2... ♖f6

1. 3 ♖c4 Bc4 can lead to a reverse Stafford gambit
- 3... ♖xe4 4 ♖c3 ♖xc3 5 dxc3 This is actually slightly better than the normal stafford gambit as white as an extra tempi.

3 ♖xe5



3... ♖c6



Here the main response is to drive the knight away and then recapture the pawn

3 ♖xe5 Here the main response is to drive the knight away and then recapture the pawn

1. 3... d6 4 ♖f3 ♖xe4 The Petroff is considered as a very solid but also very placid way to response to e5.

Black offers an exchange of knights. This trade is very favorable for white as it will damage Black's structure and give time to defend the e4 pawn. Therefore Black is sacrificing a pawn and in exchange will benefit from open diagonals for the bishops and a semi open file for the queen as well as a slight lead in development. However, if White plays accurately he should be able to come up on top of the ensuing struggle with its extra e pawn.

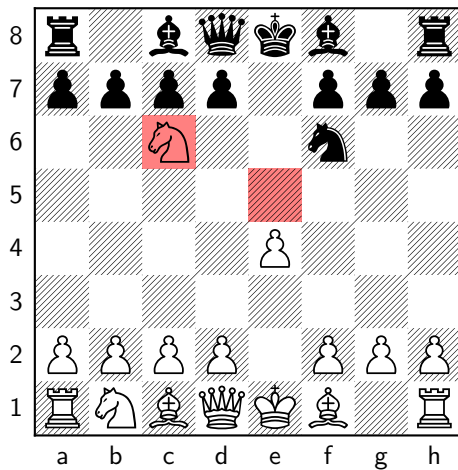
3... ♖c6 Black offers an exchange of knights. This trade is very favorable for white as it will damage Black's structure and give time to defend the e4 pawn. Therefore Black is sacrificing a pawn and in exchange will benefit from open diagonals for the bishops and a semi open file for the queen as well as a slight lead in development. However, if White plays accurately he should be able to come up on top of the ensuing struggle with its extra e pawn.

1. 4 ♖c3 White can get into a halloween Gambit by ignoring the knight. this is highly dubious.
2. 4 ♖f3 White can refuse the gambit with either Knight back to f3 or d5. It's objectively a poor decision since in theory this gambit is dubious for black but it can happen. Then the position will revert to a normal Petroff position. Stafford players would be well advised to know these lines as well.

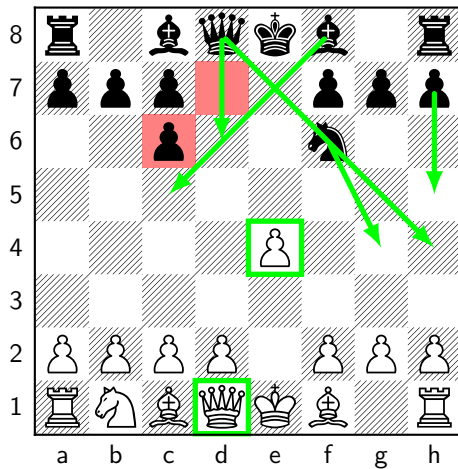
4... ♖xe4 5 ♖c3 ♖xc3 6 dxc3

3. 4 d4

4 ♖xc6



4...dxc6



This move accepts the gambit. White is technically better and Black objective is now to try to trick white into blundering something.

4 ♖xc6 This move accepts the gambit. White is technically better and Black objective is now to try to trick white into blundering something.

1. 4...bxc6 Inferior capture

Taking with d is better. It opens the light square bishop and the semi-open file for the queen.

4...dxc6 Taking with d is better. It opens the light square bishop and the semi-open file for the queen.

1. 5 e5

1.1. 5... ♖e4

1.1.1. 6 d4

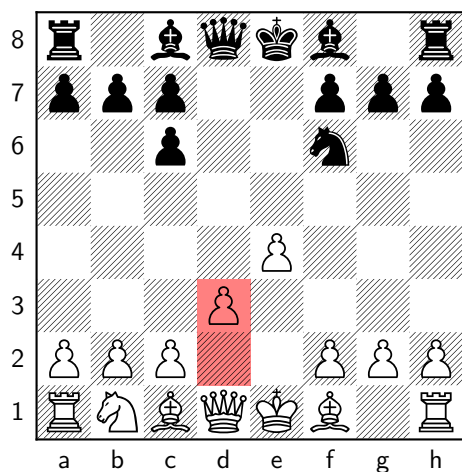
1.1.2. 6 d3 ♙c5

1.2. 5... ♖d5 6 d4 ♙f5 7 ♙c4 ♖d7 8 O-O O-O-O

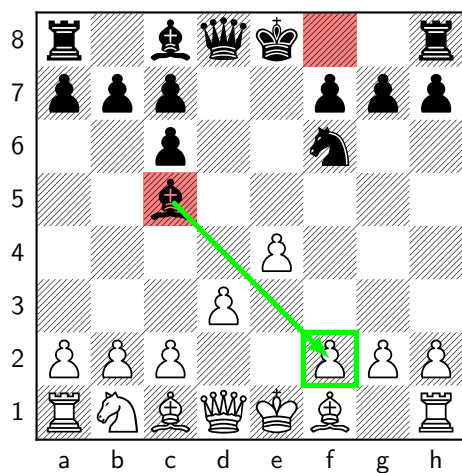
5 f3 Surprisingly f3 is a viable way of fighting the Stafford gambit

3. 5 ♖c3 ♙c5 6 h3 Very important move. Knight to g4 must be prevented.

5 d3



5... ♖c5



d3 is the normal response to the Stafford. Black has many different traps and idea depending on how White decides to set his pieces up. It's fairly easy to fall into any of Black's tricks if White isn't well prepared.

Bc5 is a pivotal move in the Stafford Gambit. Targetting the f2 pawn is key to black strategy.

5... ♖c5 Bc5 is a pivotal move in the Stafford Gambit. Targetting the f2 pawn is key to black strategy.

1. 6 h3 It's technically playable but it allows for a double sacrifice which leads to a very unpleasant King walk for white. I do not advise you to go into this as white.

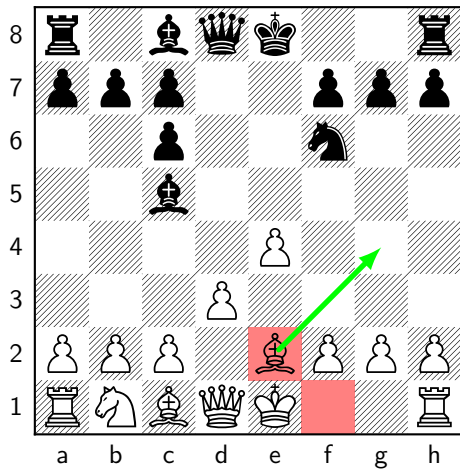
6... ♖xf2+ 7 ♔xf2 ♘xe4+ 8 ♔f3

2. 6 ♖g5 ♘xe4

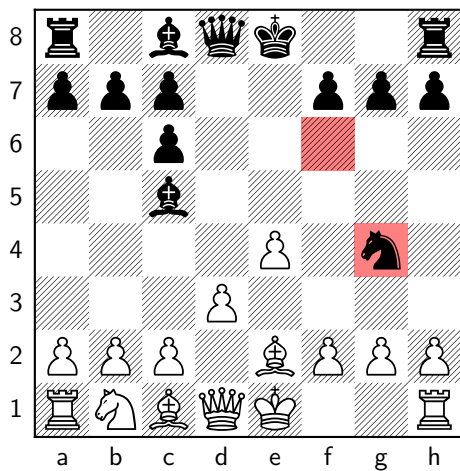
2.1. 7 ♖xd8 ♖xf2+ 8 ♔e2 ♖g4#

2.2. 7 dxe4 ♖xf2+ 8 ♔e2 ♖g4+ 9 ♔xf2 ♗xd1

6 ♖e2



6... ♘g4



Be2 seems natural, it develops the bishop while guarding the g4 square

6 ♖e2 Be2 seems natural, it develops the bishop while guarding the g4 square

1. 6... h5 Probably the most common and ambitious move for black. Very tricky lines can arise from this position.

7 c3 ♖b6

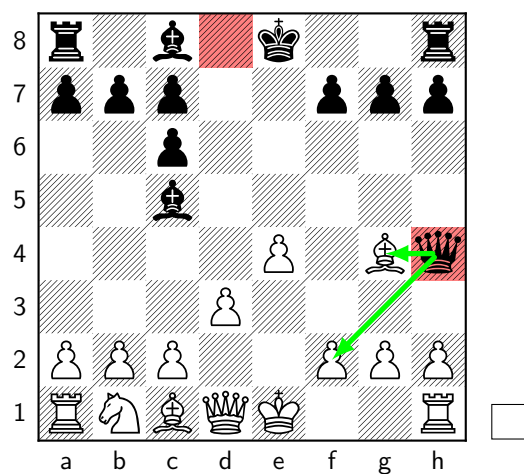
2. 6... ♗d6 7 c3 c3 d4 is a common idea to refute the Stafford. I'll explore this a bit further in later chapters.

7... ♖b6

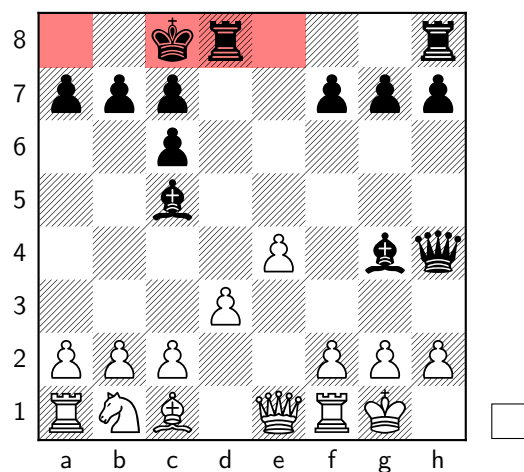
8 ♘d2 We protect the e4 pawn to play d4 and shuts down the bishop. If you get this as black you must castle Queenside and try to play c5 to re-activate your dark-square bishop

Just an example of how the game could unfold from there. Ng4 is a temporary sacrifice which allows to gain the Bishop pair

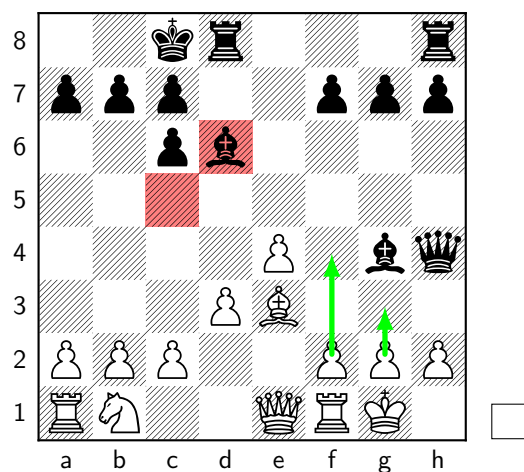
7 ♖xg4 ♔h4



8 O-O ♖xg4 9 ♔e1 O-O-O



10 ♖e3 ♖d6



Double attack to regain the piece

Objectively white should be better, but with opposing side castles and the bishop pair Black might have practical chances.

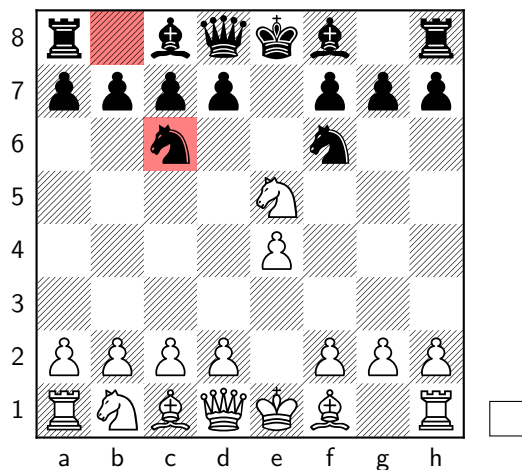
This is the favorite line of the computer but Black can also try to trick White with other ideas. You don't have to go for this as black if you want to keep more pieces on the board.



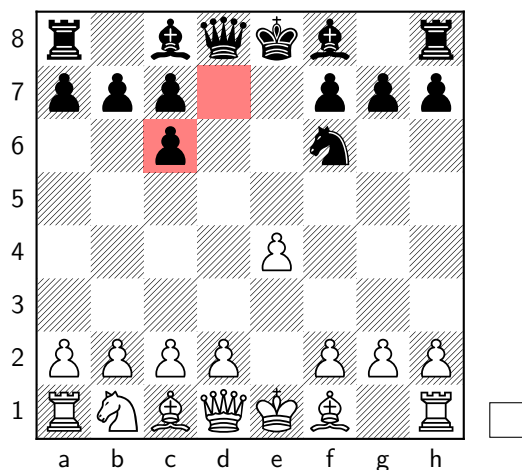
Chapter 2

Stafford Gambit: Stafford Gambit : The Big trap - 5. d3 Bc5 6. Bg5

1 e4 e5 2 d3 f6 3 exf6 c6



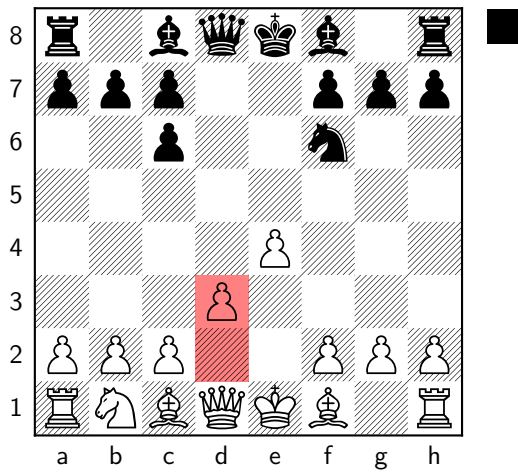
4 exf6 dxc6



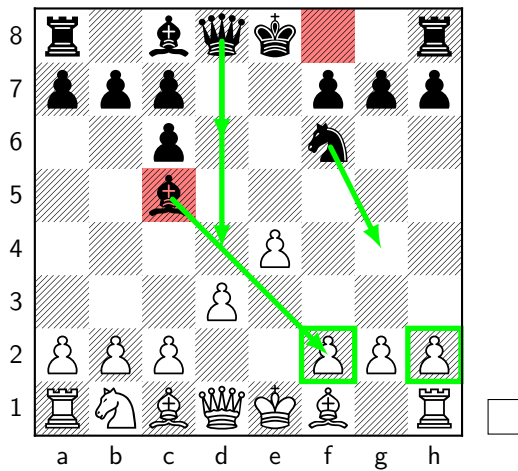
Instead of going for the main line of the Petroff Black gambits the e pawn

Now the e4 pawn is attacked. If white wants to keep its extra-pawn White needs to defend it

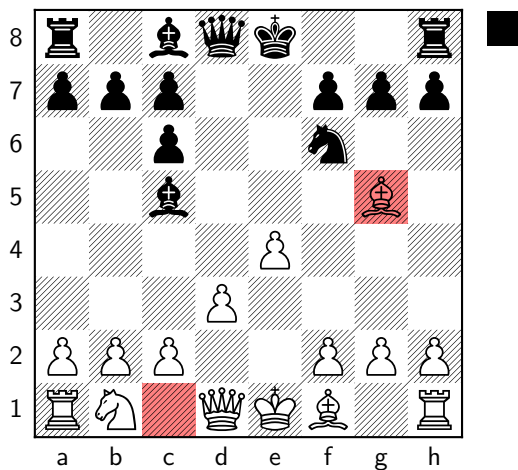
5 d3



5... ♖c5



6 ♖g5



Natural move

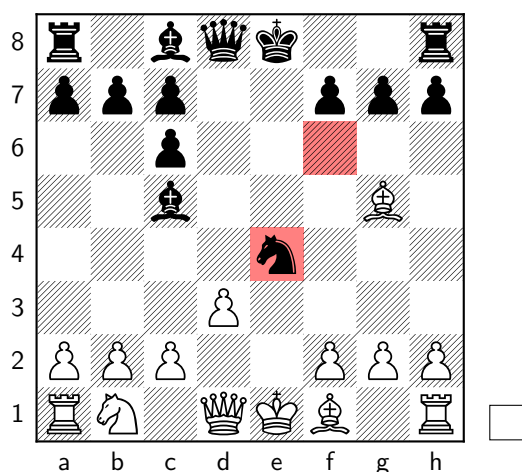
The point of the Stafford gambit is to allow for quick development and attack the white king

5... ♖c5 The point of the Stafford gambit is to allow for quick development and attack the white king

1. 6 ♖e2 That's the main move of the refutation
2. 6 h3 Prevent the black knight from going to g4, also playable

This appealing move is a mistake

6... ♖xe4



6... ♖xe4

1. 7 dxe4 Now white loses the queen

7... ♙xf2+

1.1. 8 ♖xf2 ♗xd1

1.2. 8 ♖e2 ♙g4+ This cannot be avoided

9 ♖xf2 ♗xd1

7 ♙e3 White may realise the danger and bring back their bishop

7... ♙xe3

2. 2.1. 8 fxe3 ♗h4+ White position is going to crumble but they can try to put up a fight before going down.

9 g3 ♖xg3

2.1.1. 10 hxg3 ♗xh1

2.1.2. 10 ♗g1 White is trying to create as much chaos as possible to survive but unfortunately Black has a force win whatever White does

10... ♖e4+ Discovery check [

2.1.2.1. 11 ♗g3 It's the only way to stop mate

11... ♗xh2 Threatening mate again

12 ♗f3 ♗xg3+ 13 ♗xg3 ♖xg3

And black is now winning

2.1.2.2. 11 ♖e2 ♗f2#

2.2. 8 dxe4 If they take the knight instead of the bishop we have the same tactical motive as before to win the queen

8... ♙xf2+

2.2.1. 9 ♖xf2 ♗xd1

2.2.2. 9 ♖e2 ♙g4+ 10 ♖xf2 ♗xd1

7 ♗e2 White creates a pin on the knight to limit damage

7... ♙xf2+ 8 ♖d1 ♗xg5 9 ♗xe4+ ♖d8 It's important to put the king on d8 instead of f8 to bring the rook into the game

10 ♙e2 ♗e8

3. 3.1. 11 ♗f3 ♗xe2

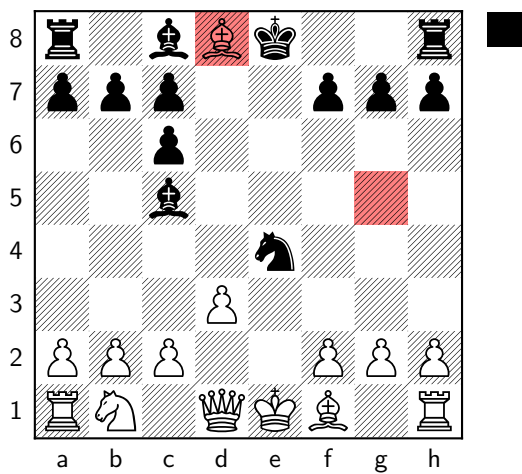
3.1.1. 12 ♖xe2 White need to take with the king to get both bishops.

12... ♙g4 13 ♖xf2 ♙xf3 14 ♖xf3

3.1.2. 12 ♗xe2 ♙g4 13 ♗xg4 ♗xg4+ 14 ♖c1

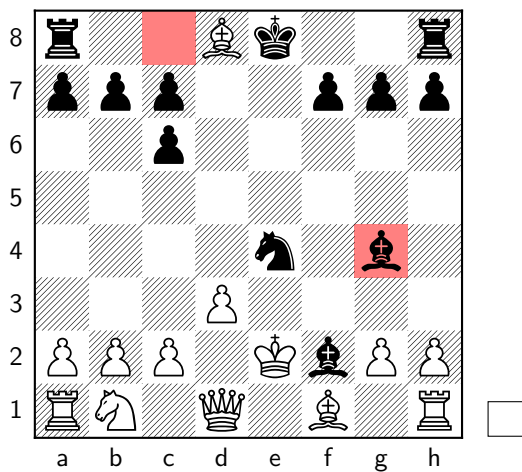
3.2. 11 ♗c4 ♗xg2 12 ♗f1 ♗xe2 13 ♖xe2 ♙h4+ 14 ♖e3 ♙g5+ 15 ♗f4 This forcing line just goes on forever but it's obvious that white is getting crushed

7 ♖xd8



Mate is now unavoidable

7... ♖xf2+ 8 ♔e2 ♖g4#



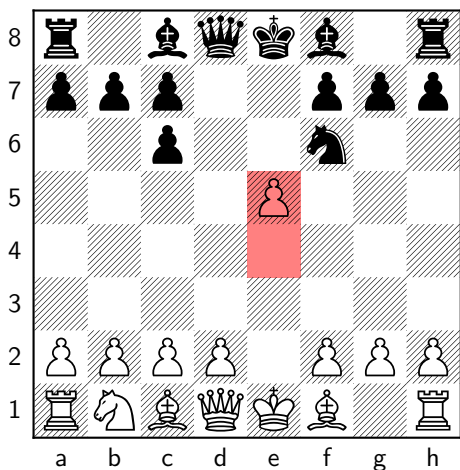
A nice mating pattern.



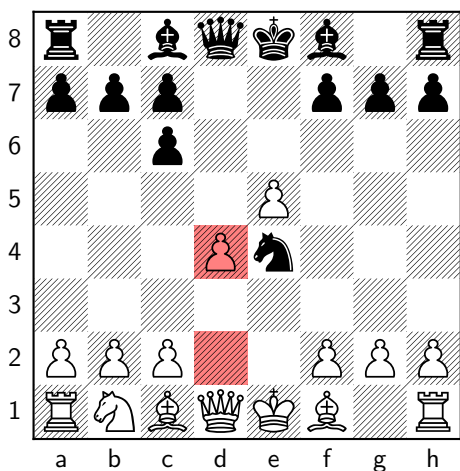
Chapter 3

Stafford Gambit: Stafford Gambit : 5. e5 Ne4 6. d4

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘f6 3 ♘xe5 ♘c6 4 ♘xc6 dxc6 5 e5



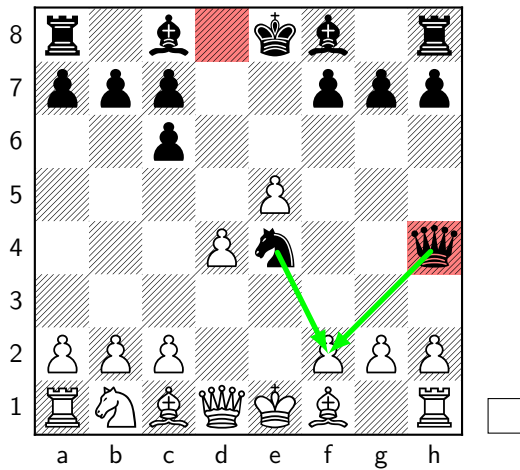
5... ♘e4 6 d4



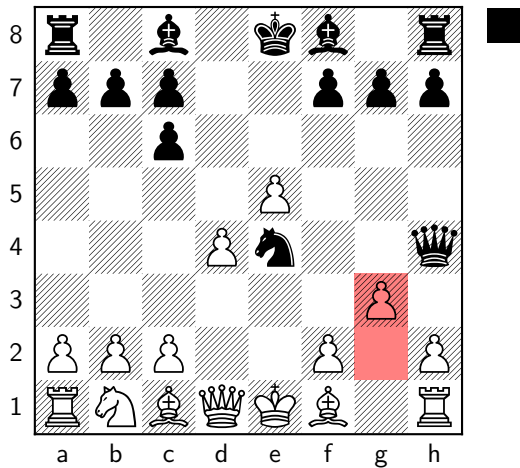
Advancing the attacked pawn to get it out of danger and gain a tempo on the knight. By no mean a bad move but a risky one. This pawn is now over extended and the f6 Knight coming in the middle of the board could easily backfire for white. White needs to play precisely from there.

Ignoring the knight for now and consolidating the pawn on e5 is the best approach here

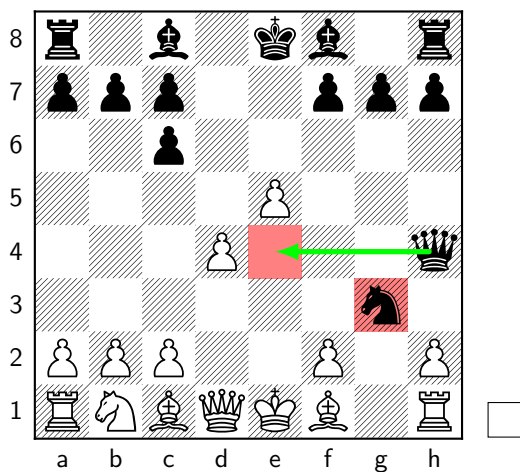
6... ♖h4



7 g3



7... ♗xg3



An enduring try to put pressure on White position

6... ♖h4 An enduring try to put pressure on White position

1. 7 ♖e2 This is the best way to defend against the Checkmate.

2. 7 ♘e3 Another solid move

2.1. 7... f6 Black should technically be losing here but still has a lot of momentum. f6 attempts to undermine White center

8 ♘d3 ♘g4 9 ♖c1

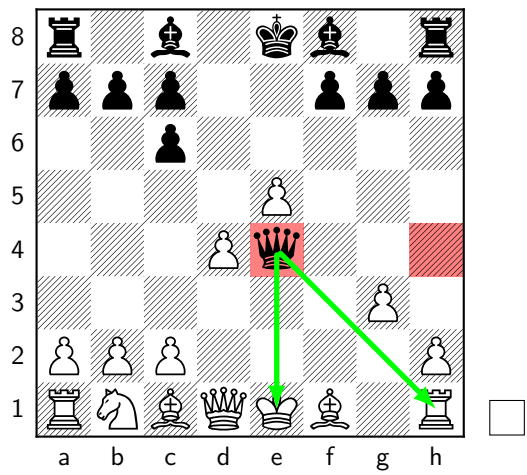
2.2. 7... ♘g4 8 ♘e2

g3 loses the rook immediately

7... ♗xg3

1. 8 h×g3 ♖×h1

8 f×g3 ♔e4+



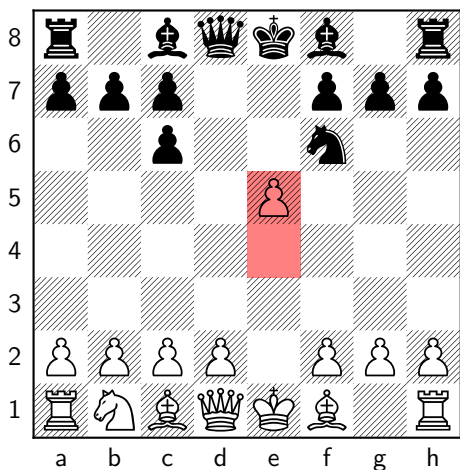


Chapter 4

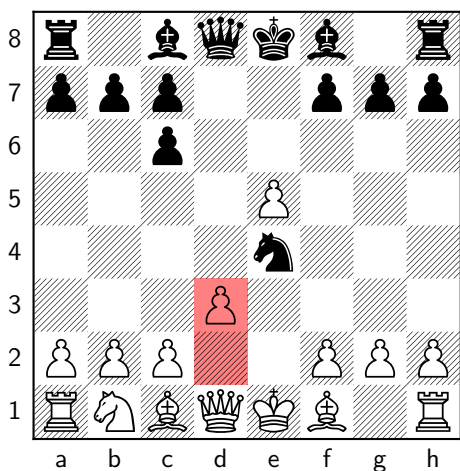
Stafford Gambit: Stafford Gambit : 5. e5 Ne4 6. d3

1 e4 e5 2 d3 f6 3 dxe5 c6 4 dxc6 dxc6 5 e5

Pushing the e pawn forward to get it out of danger and kick the f Knight away

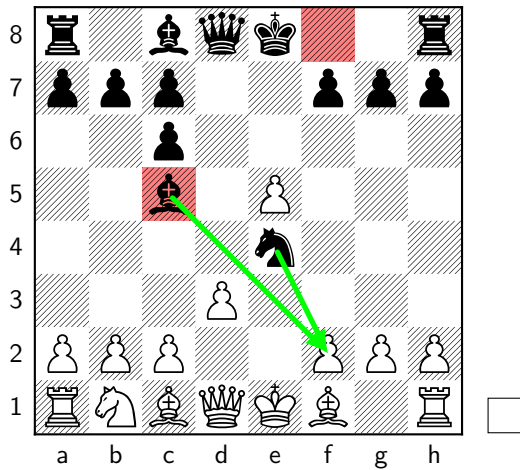


5... Ne4 6 d3

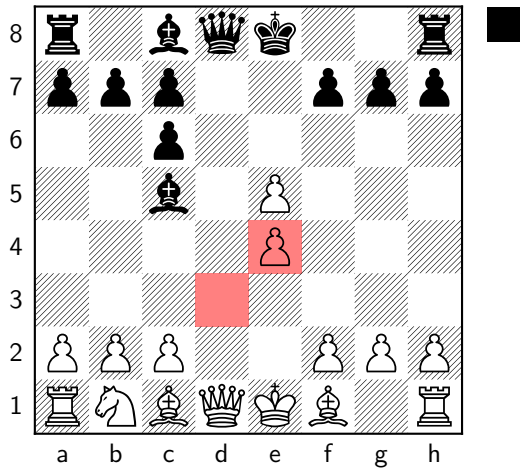


As I mentioned in the previous chapter in this line White must play d4. In this chapter I demonstrate why

6... ♖c5



7 dxe4



One issue with d3 instead of d4 is that it allows Black to activate their bishop and target the f2 pawn.

6... ♖c5 One issue with d3 instead of d4 is that it allows Black to activate their bishop and target the f2 pawn.

1. 7 ♖e3 Now White realises that they cannot take the knight so they protect the f2 pawn with the bishop.

7... ♖xe3 8 fxe3 ♖h4+ This is similar to another line we saw in a previous chapter. The duo queen + Knight is going to obliterate white position

1.1. 9 ♖e2 ♖f2#

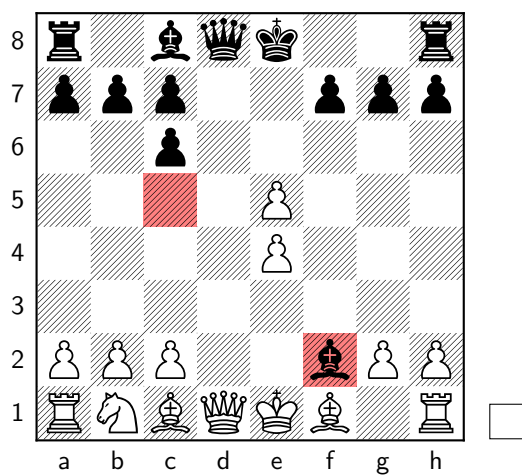
1.2. 9 g3 ♖xg3

1.2.1. 10 h×g3 ♖xh1 Black is winning

1.2.2. 10 ♖g1 ♖e4+ 11 ♖g3 ♖xh2 12 dxe4 ♖xg3+ 13 ♖d2

Taking the knight loses the queen

7... ♖xf2+



7... ♖xf2+

1. 8 ♖e2 ♖g4+ The white king has no square left and is forced to take on f2

9 ♖xf2 ♗xd1

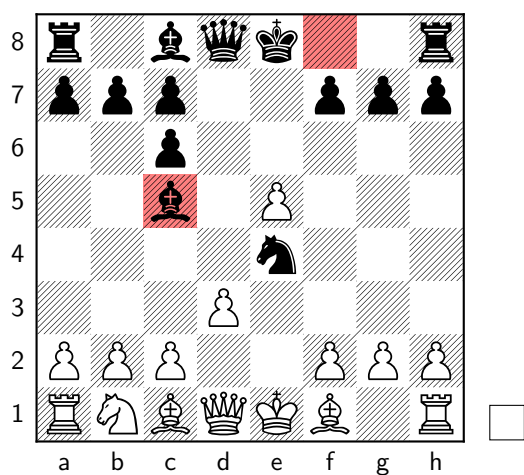


Chapter 5

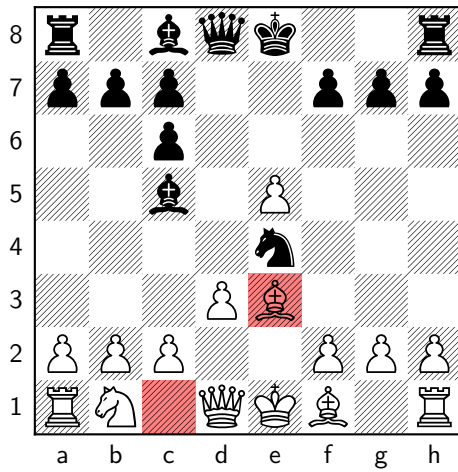
Stafford Gambit: Stafford Gambit : 5. e5 Ne4 6. d3 Bc5 7. Be3

1 e4 e5 2 Qf3 Qf6 3 Qxe5 Qc6 4 Qxc6 dxc6 5 e5
Qe4 6 d3 Qc5

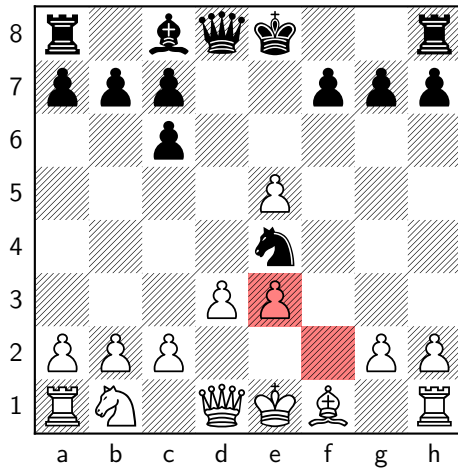
In this chapter I'll show some more sidelines in this Be3 variation



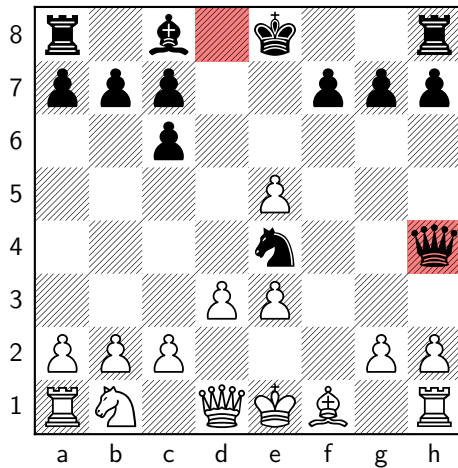
7 ♖e3



7... ♗xe3 8 fxe3



8... ♔h4+



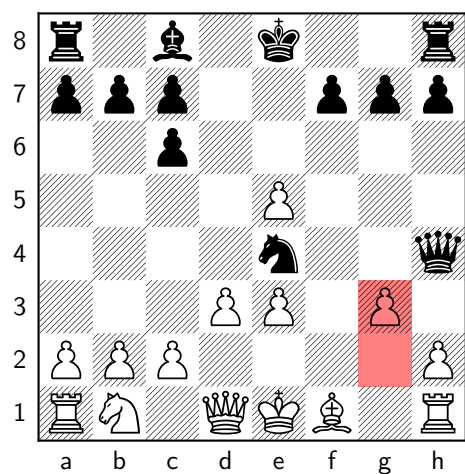
This is the only try White has to prevent losing the queen and getting checkmated.

Now the diagonal of the white king is weak

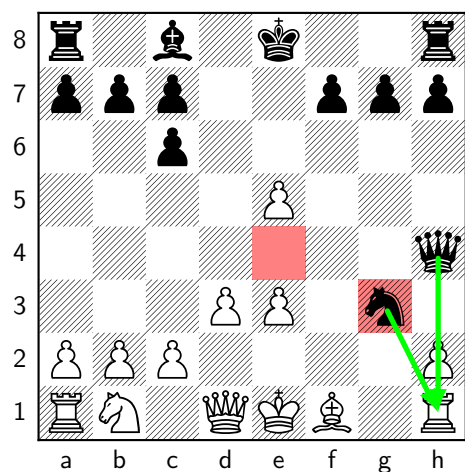
8... ♔h4+

1. 9 ♖e2 ♔f2#

9 g3



9... ♖xg3



Only move. If white tries to run away it's checkmate

9... ♖xg3

1. 10 ♖g1 ♖e4+ 11 ♖g3 Best move isn't to grab the rook but to take on h2 and reiterate the mating threat

11... ♜xh2

1.1. 12 dxe4 ♜xg3+ 13 ♖d2

- 1.2. 12 ♖f3 Trying to keep the rook and defend against checkmate. This leads to a force line that loses the queen

12... ♜h4+ 13 ♖e2 ♖g4 [

1.2.1. 14 ♜e1 ♖xf3+ 15 ♖xf3 ♜xe1 16 ♖xe4

1.2.2. 14 dxe4 ♖xf3+ 15 ♖xf3 ♜h5+ 16 ♖f2 ♜xd1

1.2.3. 14 ♜d2 ♜f2+ 15 ♖d1 ♜xf1+ 16 ♜e1 ♖xf3+ 17 ♖c1 ♜xe1#

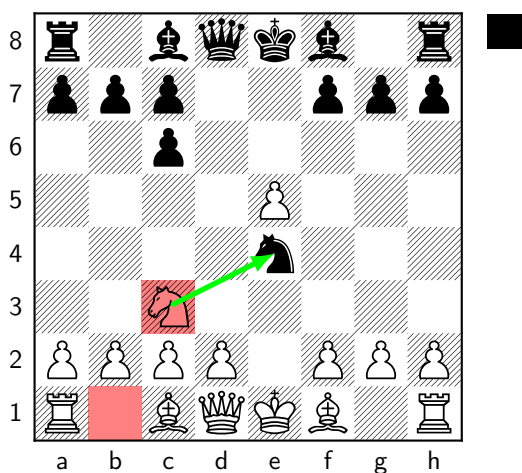


Chapter 6

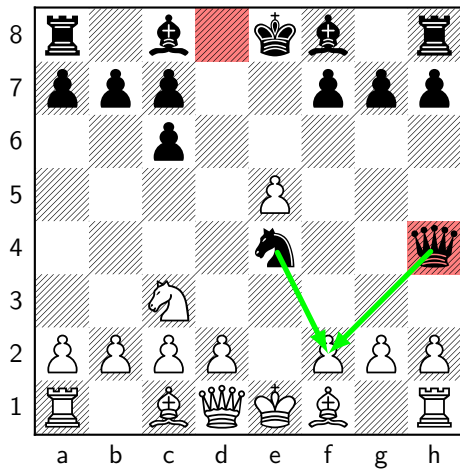
Stafford Gambit: Stafford Gambit : 5. e5 Ne4 6. Nc3

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘f6 3 ♘xe5 ♘c6 4 ♘xc6 dxc6 5 e5
♘e4 6 ♘c3

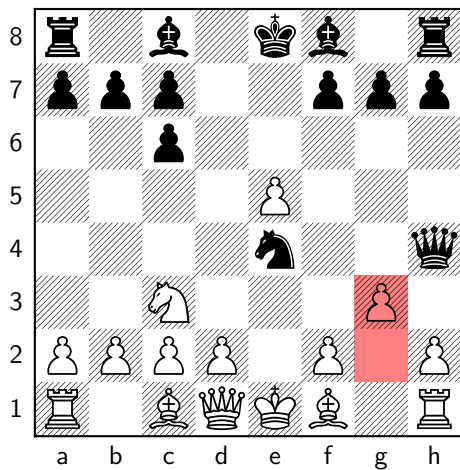
Attacking the knight to move it away from the center.
This is a good move.



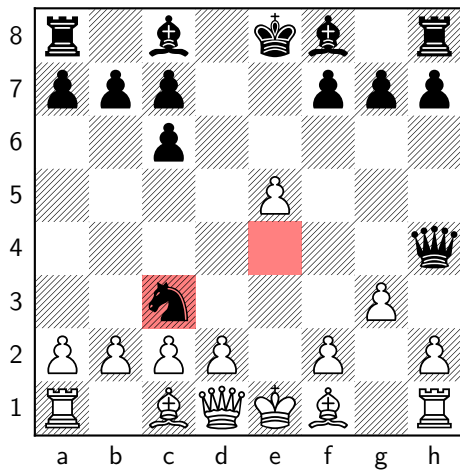
6... ♖h4



7 g3



7... ♘xc3



Black of course doesn't want to take on c3. Qh4 threatens checkmate.

6... ♖h4 Black of course doesn't want to take on c3. Qh4 threatens checkmate.

1. 7 ♖f3 This is the best response. Black is now in trouble.

1.1. 7... ♘c5

1.2. 7... ♘xc3 8 dxc3 ♙e6

7 ♘xe4 This loses the pawn and allows Black to equalize the game easily.

7... ♖xe4+ Black is going to win one of these pawns whatever white does

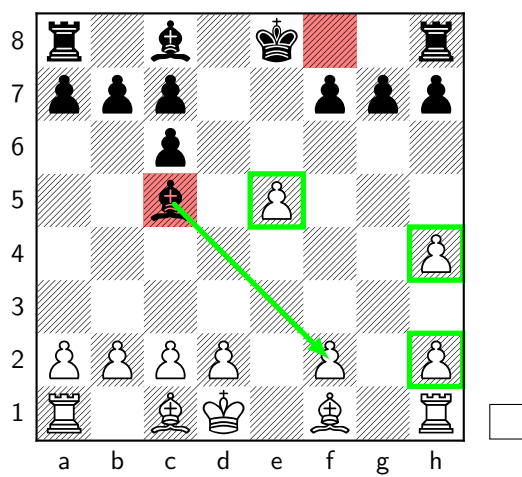
8 ♙e2 ♖xg2 9 ♙f3 ♖g6 Black is fine

White might go for the natural g3 thinking that the pawn is sufficiently protected. But here it doesn't work because of the fork on e4

7... ♘xc3

2. 8 dxc3 ♖e4+ 9 ♖e2 ♖xh1 Black is winning here.

8 g×h4 ♖×d1 9 ♜×d1 ♔c5



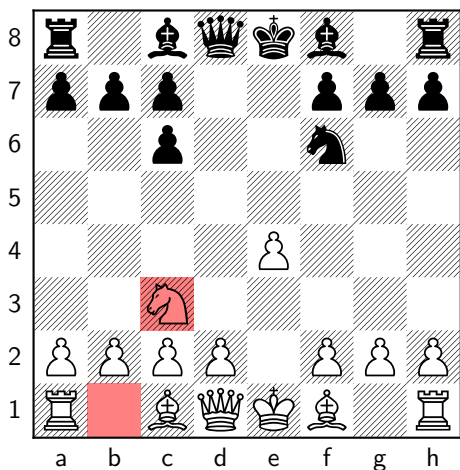
White poor pawn struture gives Black enough targets to compensate for the pawn. Black is fine here.



Chapter 7

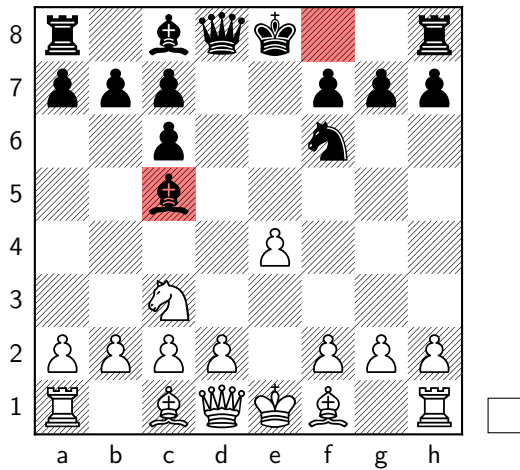
Stafford Gambit: Stafford Gambit : 5. Nc3 Bc5 6. Be2

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘f6 3 ♗xe5 ♗c6 4 ♗xc6 dxc6 5 ♗c3

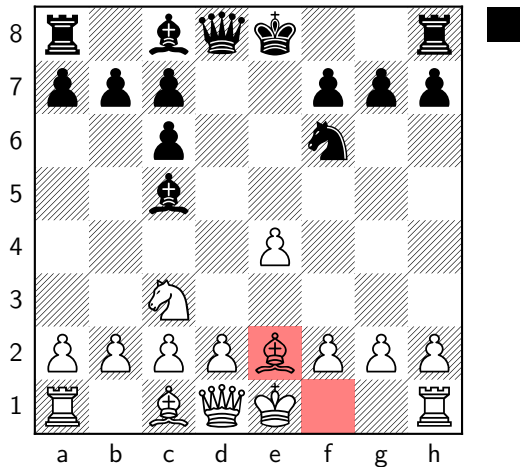


Defending the pawn while developing the knight. One of the best counter to the Stafford. Still white must play precisely to avoid being swindled.

5... ♖c5



6 ♖e2



5... ♖c5

1. 6 ♖c4 Bc4 attempts the same thing as Be2 but places the Bishop on a more aggressive square. More on this move in the next chapter

6... ♘g4 White is forced to protect with the rook or else...

7 O-O ♗h4

8 h3 ♘xf2

1.1. 9 ♖xf2 ♗xf2+ 10 ♘h1

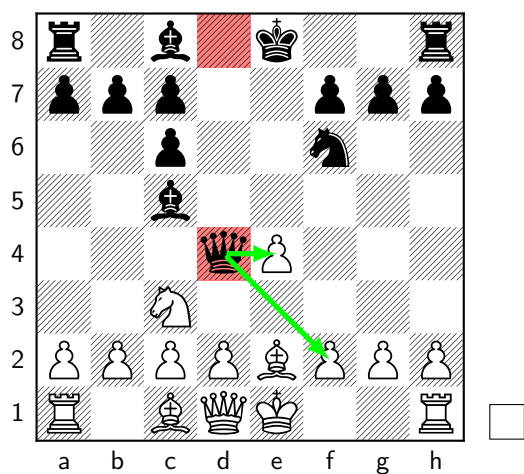
1.2. 9 ♗f3 ♘xh3+

10 ♘h1 ♘f2+ 11 ♘g1 ♗h1#

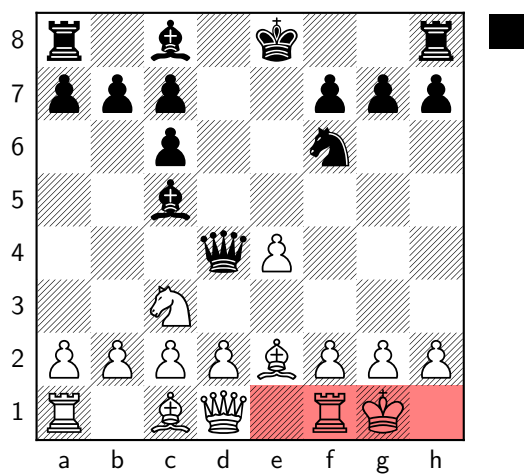
6 h3 It's a the best move. It stops Knight to g4 ideas for now. This might be the most practical line to battle the Stafford gambit. But still white has to proceed with caution as Black could attempt Fishing pole traps with h5. Deeper analysis required

Trying to castle while continuing development however this allows Black to find compensations and to drag the game into some tricky lines. This move is good example of why the Stafford is so dangerous. It looks completely fine at first glance but allows Black to potentially take the upper hand.

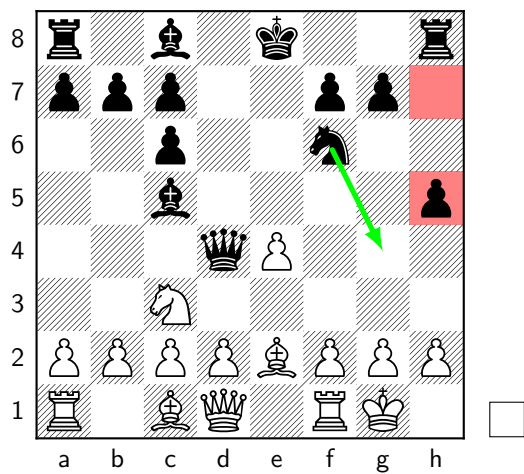
6... ♖d4



7 O-O



7... h5

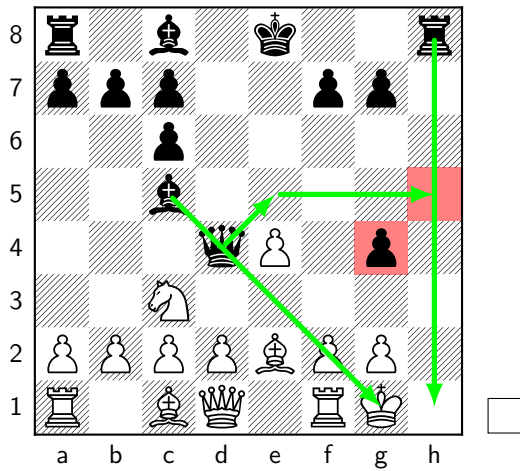


Because of the mate threat White is forced to castle.

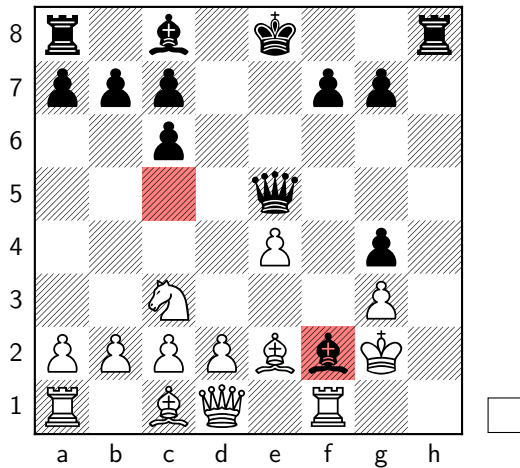
7 O-O

2. 7... ♖xe4 Note that in this line Black can already equalize and regain the pawn after Knight takes e4

8 h3 ♘g4 9 h×g4 h×g4



10 g3 ♖e5 11 ♘g2 ♗f2



It's impossible for white to defend against the idea of Queen e5 followed by queen h5.

9... h×g4 It's impossible for white to defend against the idea of Queen e5 followed by queen h5.

1. 10 ♗xg4 ♖e5 11 g3 ♗xg3#

It's a clearance sacrifice which makes it impossible for white to stop the checkmate on the h file if they capture with the rook.

11... ♗xg4 It's a clearance sacrifice which makes it impossible for white to stop the checkmate on the h file if they capture with the rook.

1. 12 ♗xg4 ♗h2+

1.1. 13 ♗e3 ♗xg3+

1.1.1. 14 ♗d4 ♗e6

1.1.1.1. 15 d3 c5+ 16 ♗xc5 ♗d6+ 17 ♗b5 a5

1.1.1.1.1. 18 b4 ♗xb4#

1.1.1.1.2. 18 a3 ♗c6#

1.1.1.2. 15 ♗c5 ♗d6#

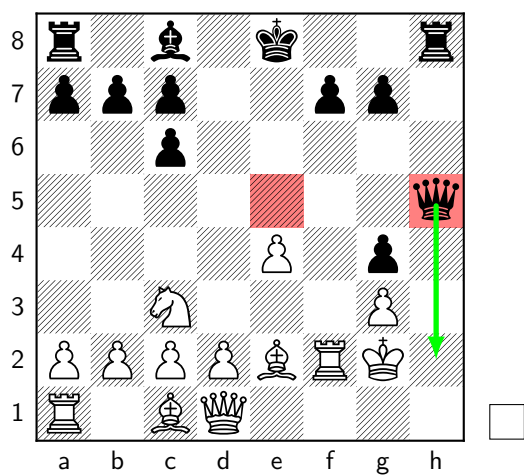
1.1.2. 14 ♗f3 ♗e6 15 d4 ♗c4 16 ♗e1 ♗h3

1.1.2.1. 17 ♗f2 ♗h6#

1.1.2.2. 17 ♗e2 ♗xe2+ 18 ♗xe2 ♗xe2 19 ♗xe2 gxf3+ 20 ♗xf3 ♗g2+ 21 ♗f2 ♗xe4+

1.2. 13 ♗e1 ♗xg3+

12 ♖xf2 ♔h5



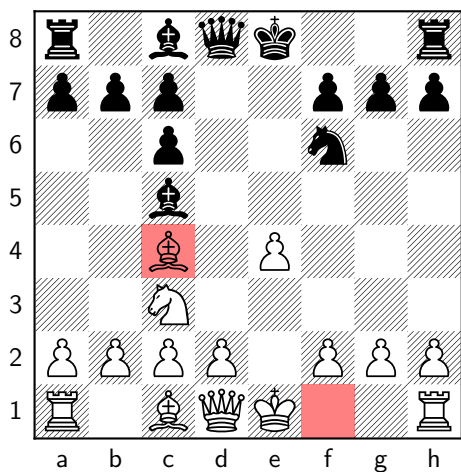
Now that the rook cannot go the h-file it's impossible for white to stop the attack



Chapter 8

Stafford Gambit: Stafford Gambit : 5. Nc3 Bc5 6. Bc4

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nf6 3 Nxe5 Nc6 4 Nxc6 dxc6 5 Nc3
 Bc5 6 Bc4



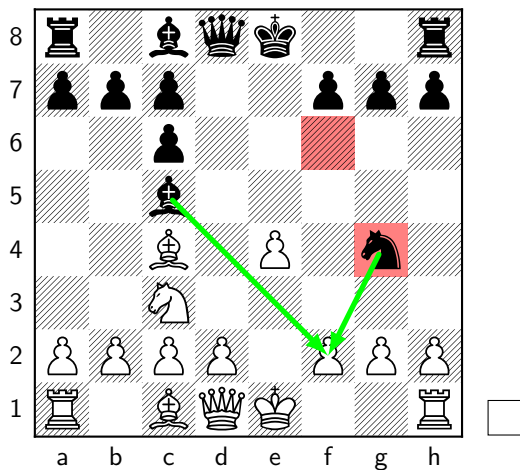
Again a natural looking move which blunders some tactics on the f2 square by allowing Knight g4. A lot of people falls for this one.

6 Bc4 Again a natural looking move which blunders some tactics on the f2 square by allowing Knight g4. A lot of people falls for this one.

1. **6... Bxf2+** Also possible here is this move. Black regains the pawn and the white king is in the centre.

7 Kxf2 Qd4+ 8 Ke1 Qxc4

6... ♖g4



White must either castle or play Rf1 to defend the pawn both options lead to an advantage for Black.

6... ♖g4 White must either castle or play Rf1 to defend the pawn both options lead to an advantage for Black.

1. 7 O-O If they castle Black immediately gets a deadly attack.

7... ♖h4

8 h3 ♖xh3 This is where the fun begins. White is going to get crushed but they can throw a few punches to try to destabilize Black.

1.1. 9 ♖xh3 ♖xh3+ 10 ♖h1 ♖e6

1.2. 9 ♖f3 ♖xh3+ 10 ♖h1 ♖f2+ 11 ♖g1 ♖h1#

1.3. 9 ♖xh3+ White has this trick. Sacrificing a bishop to pin the Knight thus stopping the attack and creating some threats on Black's king. Therefore Black should not take this free piece and simply sidestep out of the check.

1.3.1. 9... ♖f8

1.3.1.1. 10 ♖h5 This is white's best attempt to confuse Black

1.3.1.1.1. 10... ♖xh3+ Is the way to go

1.3.1.1.1.1. 11 d4 ♖xh3+ 12 ♖h2 ♖g3+ 13 ♖h1 ♖f2+

1.3.1.1.1.1.1. 14 ♖xh3 ♖xh3

1.3.1.1.1.1.2. 14 ♖g1 ♖g4+ 15 ♖f2 ♖xh3+ 16 ♖h1 ♖g1#

1.3.1.1.1.2. 11 ♖h2 ♖g3+ 12 ♖h1 ♖d6 13 ♖g8+ ♖e7 14 ♖f7+ ♖d8

There is no check left

15 ♖f8+ ♖xh3

1.3.1.1.2. 10... ♖xh3+ This is a mistake because after Kh2 Black has no good discovery. There is no double check and both the Queen and the Knight are attacked. Therefore Black is losing.

11 ♖h2

11... ♖d6+ 12 e5 ♖xe5+ 13 ♖xe5 ♖g5+ 14 ♖g1 ♖xh3+ 15 gxh3 ♖g3+ 16 ♖h1 ♖h2#

1.3.1.2. 10 ♖f3 This is checkmate

10... ♖xh3+ 11 ♖h2 ♖f2+ 12 ♖h3 ♖d6+ 13 e5 ♖xe5+ 14 ♖g1 ♖xh3+ 15 gxh3 ♖g3+ 16 ♖h1 ♖h2#

1.3.2. 9... ♖xh3 10 d4 Cutting the connection between the bishop and the Knight

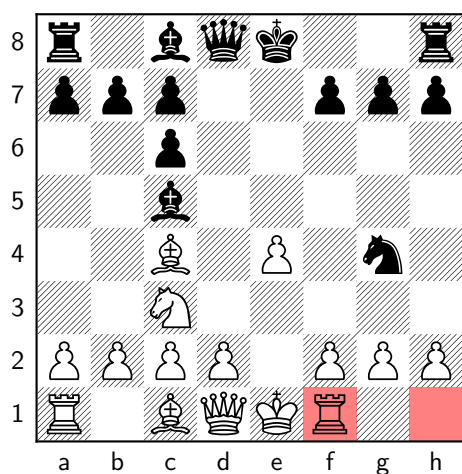
10... ♖b6 11 ♖xh3+

7 ♖f3 Trying to counter-attack the f7 pawn. Unfortunately this runs into Black's next move

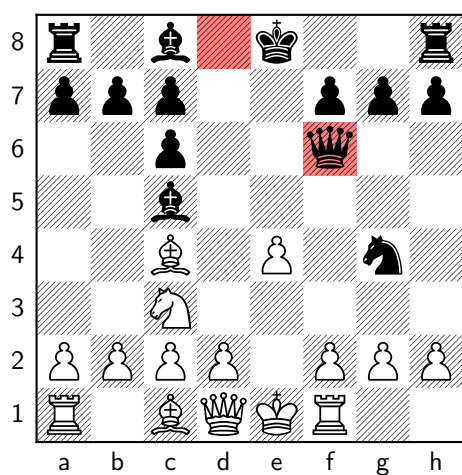
7... ♖e5 Simultaneously defending f7 and forking queen and Bishop [

2. 2.1. 8 ♖e2 ♖h4 9 g3 ♖h3 10 ♖f1 ♖xc4 11

7 ♖f1



7... ♖f6



This is white best tries but it leads to a very complicated and messy position.

Putting even more pressure on f2

7... ♖f6 Putting even more pressure on f2

1. 8 h3 ♗xf2+ 9 ♘e2 The white king has now lost his castling right and is stuck in the center of the board. Besides Black has recovered his pawn.

9... b5 10 ♗b3 b4 11 ♘a4 ♖f4

- 1.1. 12 h×g4 Taking the Knight leads to checkmate as it allows the light-square bishop to jump into action.

12... ♗×g4+ 13 ♘d3 ♖d8+ 14 ♗d5 ♖×d5+

1.1.1. 15 exd5 ♖d4#

1.1.2. 15 ♖c4 ♗e6 16 ♘b3 ♖d3+ 17 ♘×b4 ♖×e4+ 18 ♖a5 ♖d5+ 19 ♘c5 ♖×c5+ 20 ♖a4 ♖b5#

1.2. 12 d3 ♖g3

- 1.2.1. 13 h×g4 Again taking the Knight leads to a forced-checkmate sequence.

13... ♗×g4+ 14 ♘d2 ♖e3#

1.2.2. 13 ♗×f7+

1.2.2.1. 13... ♘e7 14 ♖d2 The p

1.2.2.2. 13... ♗×f7 14 ♖e1

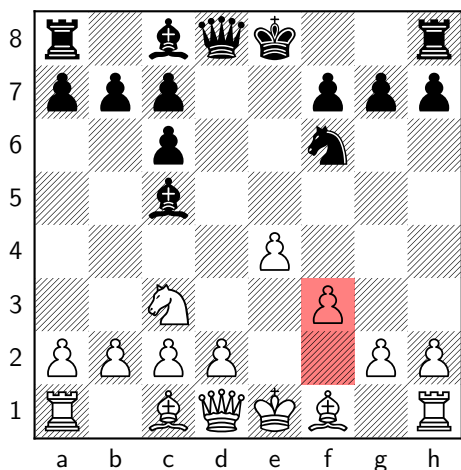
8 f3 ♘×h2 9 ♖h1 ♖h4+ 10 ♘e2 ♖f2+ 11 ♘d3



Chapter 9

Stafford Gambit: Stafford Gambit : 5. Nc3 Bc5 6. f3 O-O 7. Ne2

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘f6 3 ♘xe5 ♘c6 4 ♘xc6 dxc6 5 ♘c3 ♘c5 6 f3



Surprisingly f3 is actually a viable option for white if white know what they are doing. However it will lead to an uncomfortable position with chances of swindling the game for black. I don't recommend this for white although it could be a descent surprise weapon against an oponent used to playing the Stafford.

6 f3 Surprisingly f3 is actually a viable option for white if white know what they are doing. However it will lead to an uncomfortable position with chances of swindling the game for black. I don't recommend this for white although it could be a descent surprise weapon against an oponent used to playing the Stafford.

2. 6... ♘h5 credit to @jdcgreat for bringing this line to my attention. With Nh5 Black exploits the fact that the f3 pawn blocks the view of the queen. Of course the idea is to set up Qh4+ tactics

7 d3 ♖h4+ 8 ♔d2 White now finds himself in quite an uncomfortable position

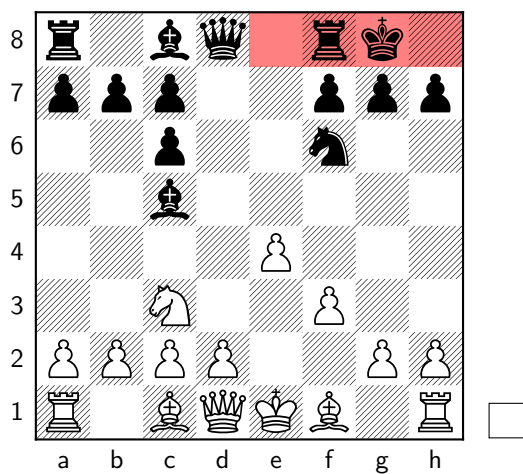
1.1. **8... ♗e6**

1.2. **8... ♘g3** doesn't work due to...

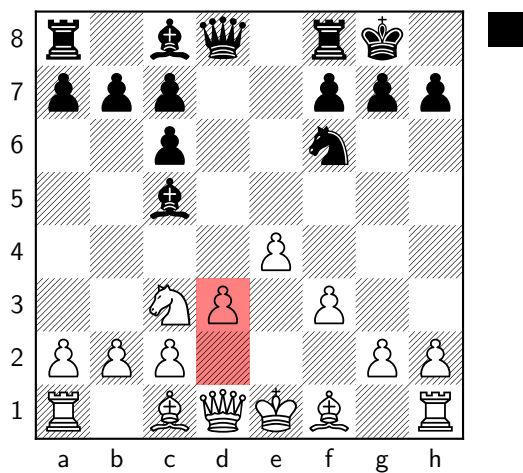
9 ♖e1 ... pinning the knight to the queen and preventing black from winning the rook

9... ♘xf1+

6...O-O



7 d3



6...O-O

1. 7 $\text{N}e2$ A prime example of what not to do as white in the Stafford

7... $\text{N}xe4$ 8 $fxe4$ $\text{Q}h4+$ 9 $\text{N}g3$

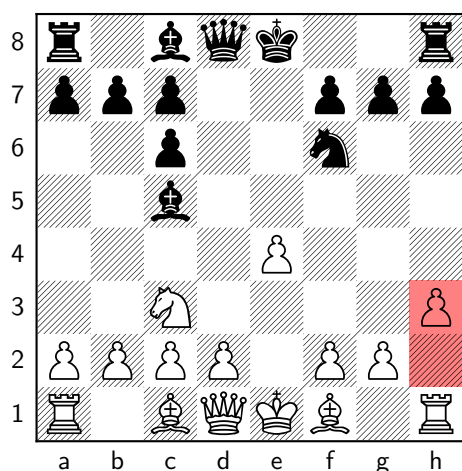
This setup is awkward to play for white but should be good.



Chapter 10

**Stafford Gambit: Stafford Gambit : 5.
Nc3 Bc5 6. h3**

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘f6 3 ♘xe5 ♘c6 4 ♘xc6 dxc6 5 ♘c3 ♘c5 6 h3



h3 is a good move for white. This is one of the set-up which in theory refute the Stafford. Black's usual plans will not work against this because white has control over g4 and will try to castle long after d3 and Be3 to protect his king.

6 h3 h3 is a good move for white. This is one of the set-up which in theory refute the Stafford. Black's usual plans will not work against this because white has control over g4 and will try to castle long after d3 and Be3 to protect his king.

1. **6... ♖d4** Credit goes to zorankchess for this idea.

7 ♖f3 Defending the mate

7... ♜b4 Trying to get a pawn back by removing the c3 knight. White has two good options. Give up the pawn with a3 or keep the pawn Bd3

1.1. **8 ♜d3** But Bd3 guards everything

8... ♘d7 We are trying to manoeuvre our knight to e5 to hit the Bishop which isn't very well placed [

1.1.1. **9 O-O** This is the most practical line for white IMO

9... ♘e5 10 ♖e3

1.1.1.1. **10... ♖xe3 11 dxe3**

1.1.1.1.1. **11... ♜d7 12 ♘e2**

1.1.1.1.2. **11... ♜xc3 12 bxc3**

1.1.1.2. **10... ♖d6 11 ♜e2**

11... ♜c5 12 ♖g3

1.1.2. **9 ♘e2** The engine's top choice. But from a practical and human perspective it's just a horrible move.

9... ♖d6 10 ♖g3 Trying to force a queen trade

10... ♘e5 It's better to decline and give a second pawn

1.1.2.1. **11 ♖xg7** You can try to complicate the game like this. White's pieces really lack coordination. The Dark-square Bishop is stuck behind the pawns, the queen is

11... ♜f8

1.1.2.1.1. **12 ♘f4** preventing Be6

12... ♜d7

1.1.2.1.1.1. **13 ♖g5** White has to stop black from castling queen side and from launching a big attack.

1.1.2.1.1.2. **13 O-O** Castling is too dangerous or white here but you

1.1.2.1.1.3. **13 ♖g3 O-O-O**

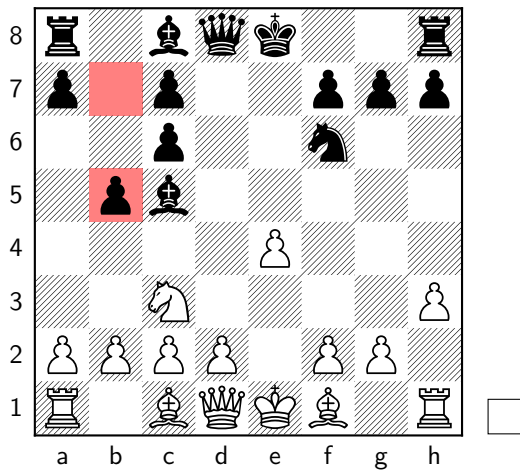
1.1.2.1.2. **12 ♖xh7**

1.1.2.1.2.1. **12... ♜e6**

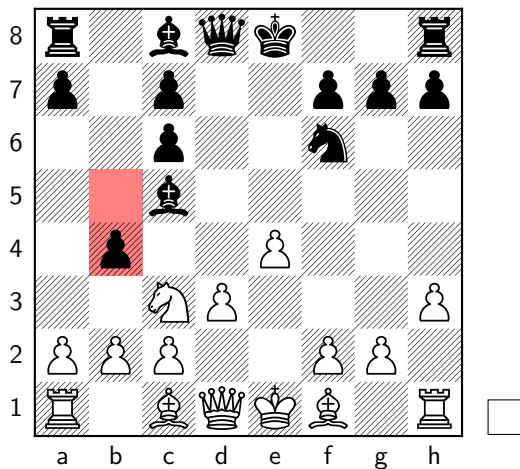
13 O-O O-O-O If white allows this Black gets a winning mating attack thanks to all of the open files and diagonals in front of the white king

1.1.2.1.2.2. **12... ♘xd3+**

6... b5



7 d3 b4



6... b5

2. 7 ♖f3 I haven't look too deep into this variation yet but Qf3 seems like a reasonable idea to avoid Black's trap.

7... b4 8 ♘e2 ♙e6 9 d3 ♜d6 10 ♙d2

2. 7 a3 a3 is probably the simpler way to deal with b5. White stops b4.

2.1. 7... O-O 8 d3 In this position, unfortunately black doesn't seem to have a lot of resources to try to swindle the game.

8... a5

2.2. 7... a5 8 d3

2.2.1. 8... ♙e6

2.2.2. 8... b4 9 axb4 axb4 It's impossible for black to play b4 now because of the pin.

7... b4

1. 8 ♘b1 ♘xe4 9 dxe4 ♙xf2+ 10 ♙e2 ♙a6+ Once b4 is played there is no way to avoid these tactics

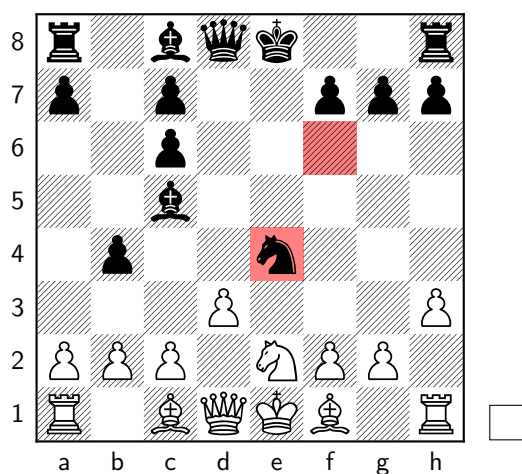
2. 8 ♘a4 ♙xf2+ 9 ♙xf2 ♘xe4+ Of course white cannot capture the knight as the pawn is pinned to the queen.

2.1. 10 ♙g1 Most people here try to hide the King on g1 but this allows Black to force a repetition and the game is a draw.

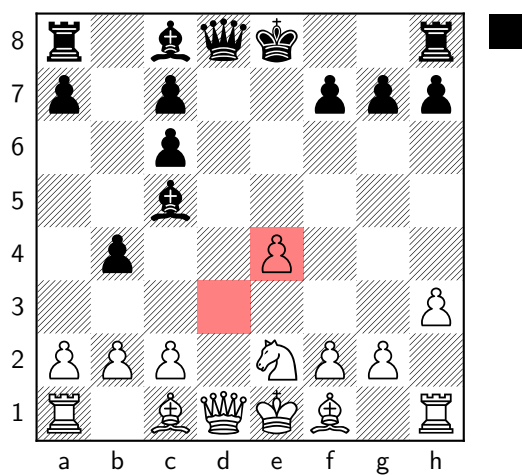
10... ♜d4+ 11 ♙h2 ♜d6+ And b

2.2. 10 ♙e3 ♘g3 11 ♙f2

8 ♖e2 ♖xe4



9 dxe4



That's the all point of advancing the b pawn and chasing the Knight. Here Knight e2, the most natural move runs into a nasty tactic.

8... ♖xe4 That's the all point of advancing the b pawn and chasing the Knight. Here Knight e2, the most natural move runs into a nasty tactic.

1. 9 d4 Only move but it's already to late black has at the very least equalize.

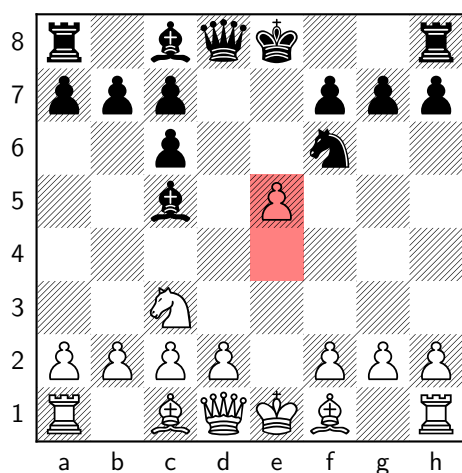
Taking the Knight will now lose the queen



Chapter 11

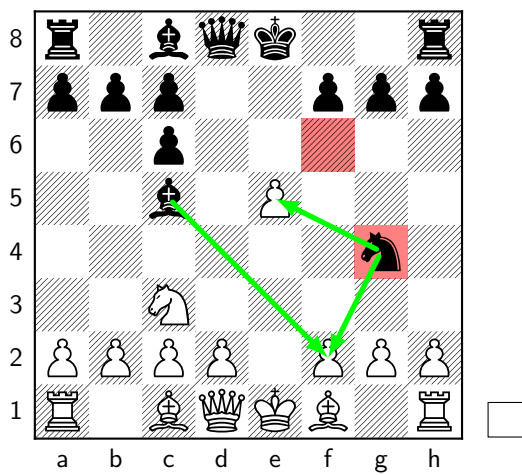
Stafford Gambit: Stafford Gambit : 5. Nc3 Bc5 6. e5??

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘f6 3 ♘xe5 ♘c6 4 ♘xc6 dxc6 5 ♘c3
♙c5 6 e5



Kudos to tanoCurec for suggesting this variation. In this position e5 is obviously a blunder. It offers Black the extra tempi needed to launch a devastating attack.

6... ♖g4

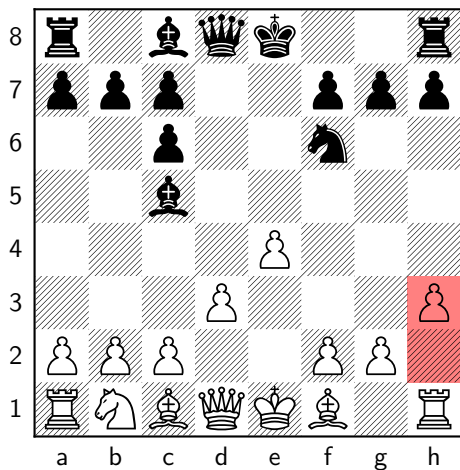




Chapter 12

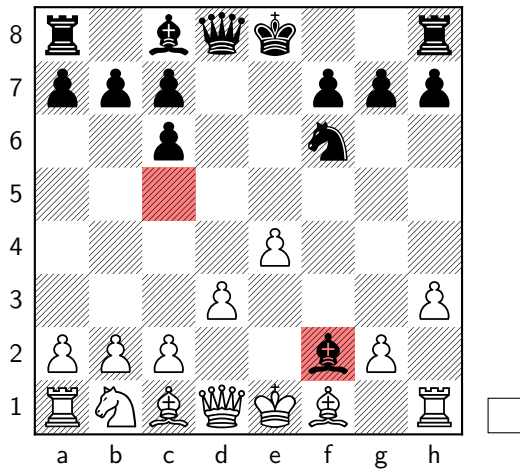
Stafford Gambit: Stafford Gambit : 5. d3 Bc5 6. h3?!

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nf6 3 Nxe5 Nc6 4 Nxc6 dxc6 5 d3
 Bc5 6 h3

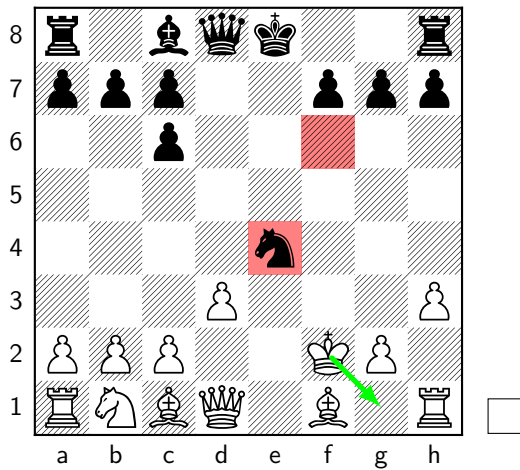


In this chapter we will be looking at the move 6. h3. This move is in my opinion inaccurate as it allows Black to chase the white king in the middle of the board with a nice double sacrifice.

6... ♗xf2+



7 ♖xf2 ♘xe4+



We sacrifice the Bishop on f3

7... ♘xe4+

1. 8 dxe4 ♖xd1

2. 8 ♖e3 O-O

2.1. 9 ♖xe4 We get a transposition

2.2. 9 ♖f3 ♘g5

2.2.1. 10 ♖g3 ♗e8+ 11 ♖f2 ♖d4+ 12 ♗e3 ♖xb2 13 ♖xg5 ♖xa1

2.2.2. 10 ♖f4 Apparently White can keep the advantage with this move because it stops Queen to d5 check.

10... ♗e8+ 11 ♖f2 ♘e6 12 ♖d2 Black is busted here

8 ♖g1 Leads to draw by peerpetual checks.

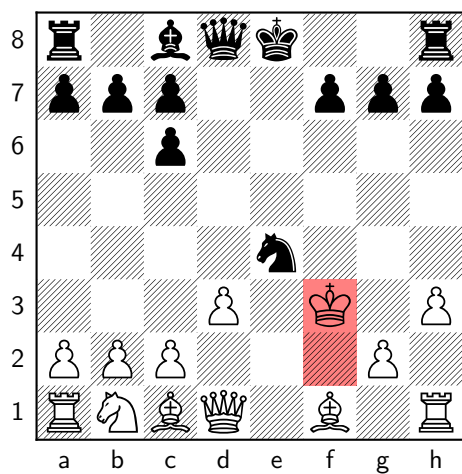
8... ♖d4+ 9 ♖h2

9... ♖e5+

3. 3.1. 10 ♖g1

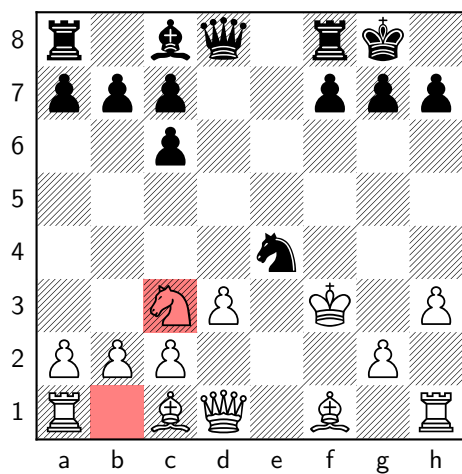
3.2. 10 g3 ♖xg3#

8 ♖f3

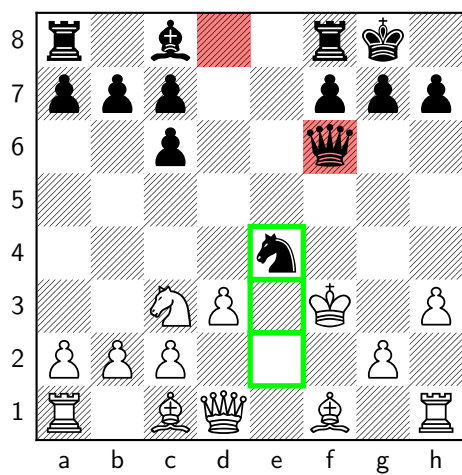


Of course you cannot capture the knight here. At this point we have one pawn for the piece. Our main compensation resides in the weakness of the white king.

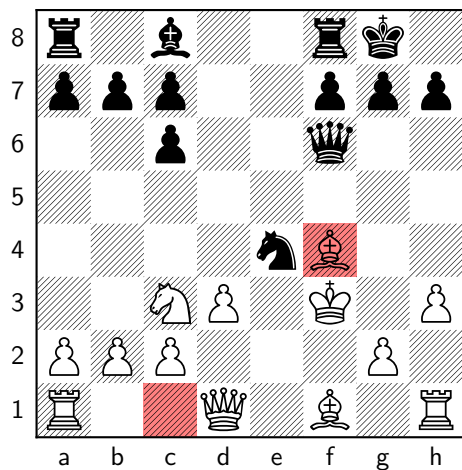
9 ♖c3



9... ♖f6+



10 ♗f4



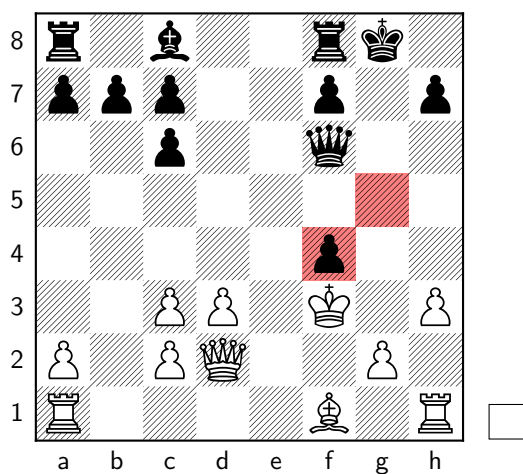
In this position most people will be too afraid to even take the knight

9... ♖f6+

1. 10 ♖xe4 ♗e8#
2. 10 ♖e3 ♖f2+ 11 ♖xe4 ♗e8#
3. 10 ♖e2 ♖f2#

This is the only move, everything else leads to checkmate

10... ♖xc3 11 bxc3 g5 12 ♔d2 gxf4



Material is roughly equal but the white king is just awkward on f3. This should be fine for black

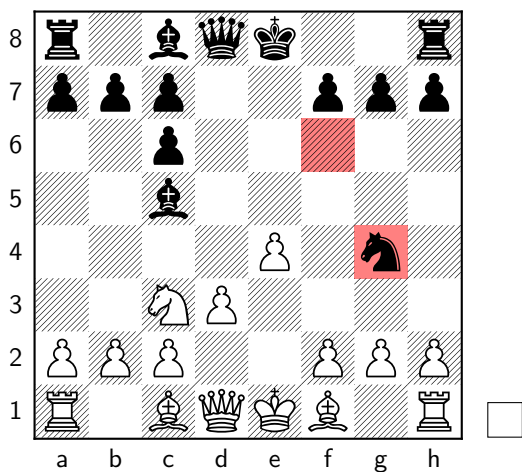


Chapter 13

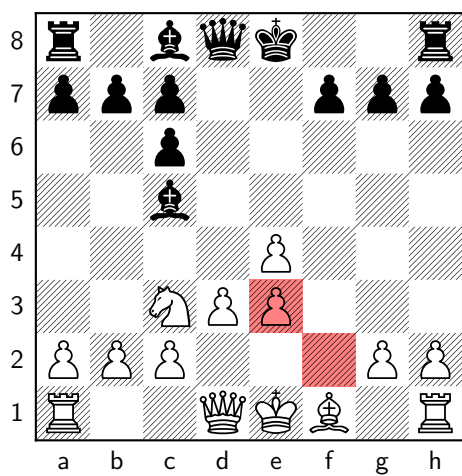
Stafford Gambit: Stafford Gambit : 5. d3 Bc5 6. Nc3

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nf6 3 Nxe5 Nc6 4 Nxc6 dxc6 5 d3
 Nc5 6 Nc3 Ng4

There is no way to defend the f pawn



7 ♖e3 ♜xe3 8 fxe3



8 fxe3

1. 8... ♜h4+ 9 g3 ♜g5 10 ♜f3 ♖g4 11 ♜f4 ♜xf4

1.1. 12 gxf4 ♖xe3

1.2. 12 exf4 ♖f3 13 ♖h3 ♖xh1



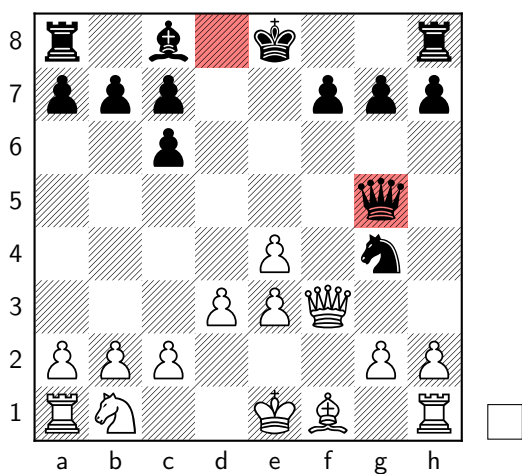
Chapter 14

Stafford Gambit: Stafford Gambit : 5. d3 Bc5 6. Be3

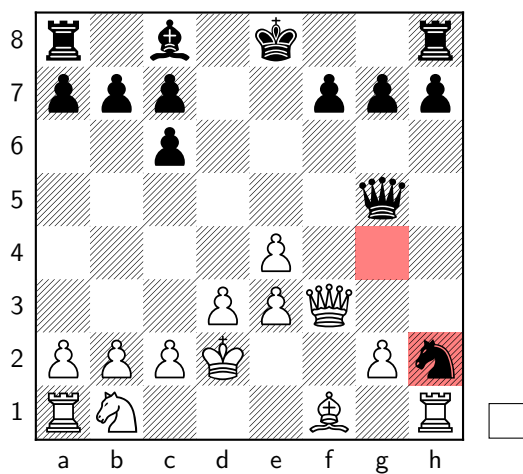
1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘f6 3 ♘xe5 ♘c6 4 ♘xc6 dxc6 5 d3 ♘c5 6 ♘e3 ♘xe3 7 fxe3 ♘g4 8 ♖f3 ♖g5

8... ♖g5

1. 9 ♖f4



9 ♔d2 ♖xh2



9... ♖xh2

1. 10 ♖xh2 ♗e5

11 ♖h5 ♗xb2

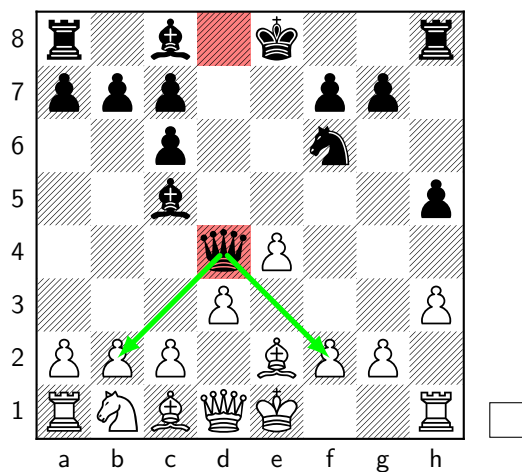


Chapter 15

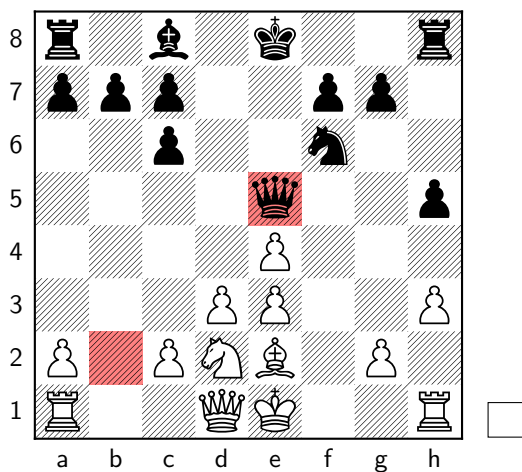
Stafford Gambit: Stafford Gambit : 5. d3 Bc5 6. Be2 h3 7. Be3

1 e4 e5 2 f3 f6 3 xe5 c6 4 xc6 dxc6 5 d3 c5 6 e2 h5 7 h3 d4

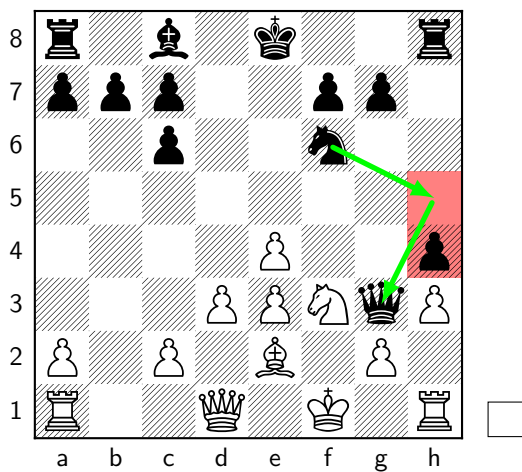
1. 8 O-O d6



8 ♖e3 ♜xb2 9 ♘d2 ♙xe3 10 fxe3 ♚e5



11 ♘f3 ♜g3+ 12 ♙f1 h4



10... ♚e5

1. 11 O-O ♙xh3 12 g×h3 ♜g3+ 13 ♙h1 ♜xh3+
14 ♙g1

1.1. 14... ♜g3+ 15 ♙h1 ♘g4
16 ♘f3 ♙h6 17 ♚e1 ♜h3+ 18 ♙g1 ♙g6 19
♜h4 ♘e5+ 20 ♙f2 ♙g2+ 21 ♙e1 ♘xh3+

1.2. 14... ♙h6

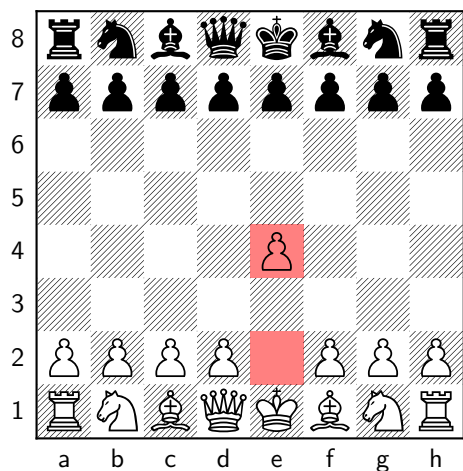
This is pleasant for Black



Chapter 16

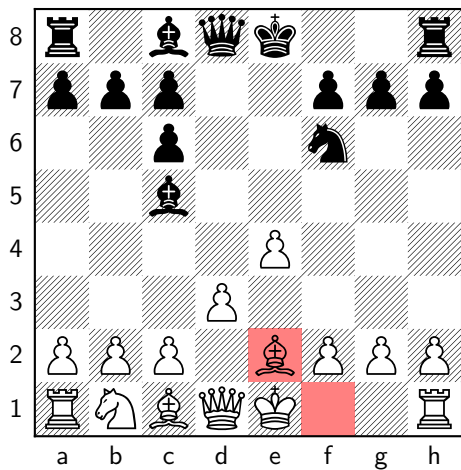
Stafford Gambit: Stafford Gambit : Hafu Variation (Refutation) 5. d3 Bc5 6. Be2 h5 7. c3 Bb6

1 e4

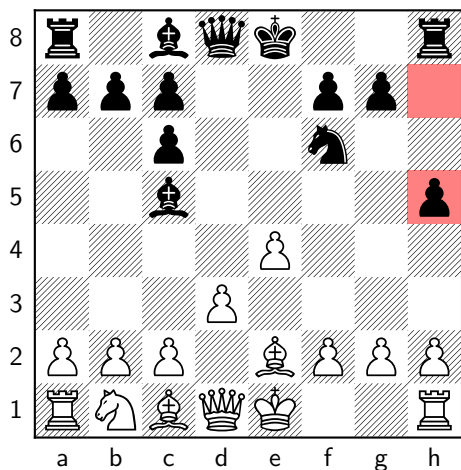


In this chapter we will be looking at the Stafford from white perspective.

1...e5 2 ♘f3 ♘f6 3 ♘xe5 ♘c6 4 ♘xc6 dxc6 5 d3 ♘c5 6 ♙e2



6...h5



This setup is supposed to be the strongest refutation of the Stafford Gambit

6...h5

1. 7 O-O ♘g4

1.1. 8 ♙xg4 hxg4

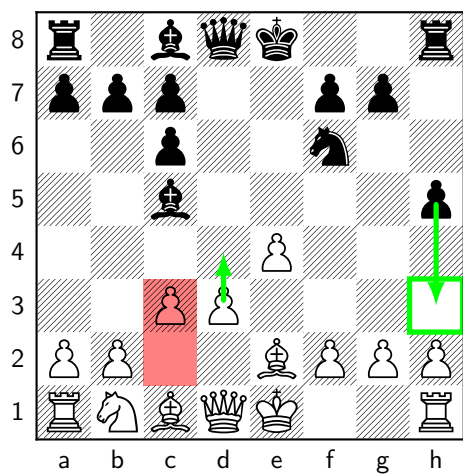
1.2. 8 h3 ♖d6 9 hxg4 hxg4 10 g3 ♖xg3#

7 h3

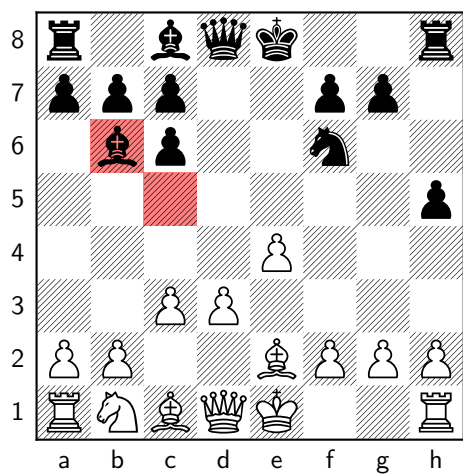
2. 2.1. 7... ♖d6 8 c3 ♙b6 9 ♘d2 ♘g8 10 a4

2.2. 7... ♘h7 8 c3 ♖f6 9 d4

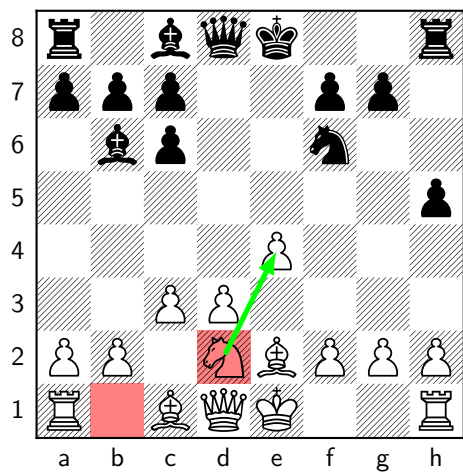
7 c3



7... ♖b6



8 ♘d2

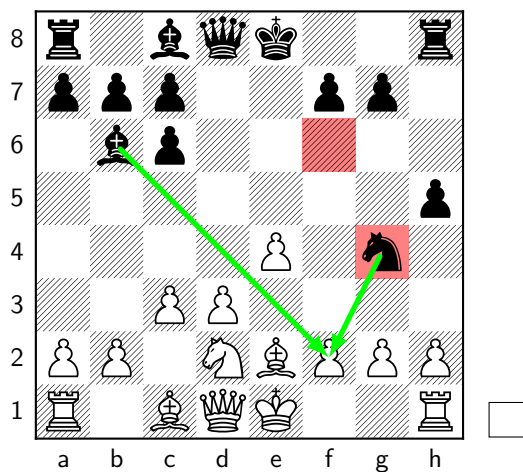


The idea is to shut down this pesky dark square bishop with d4

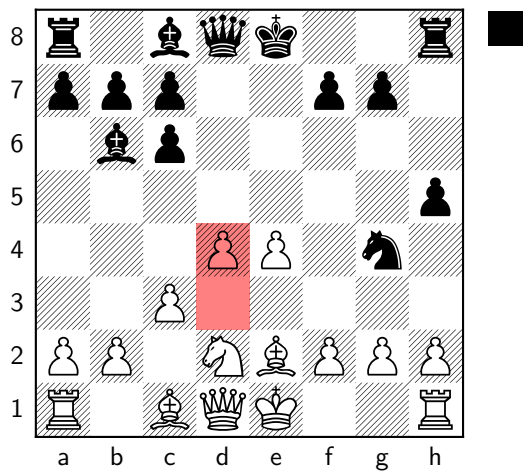
Prevents d4. If d4 now then black can take on e4

Protects the e4 pawn.

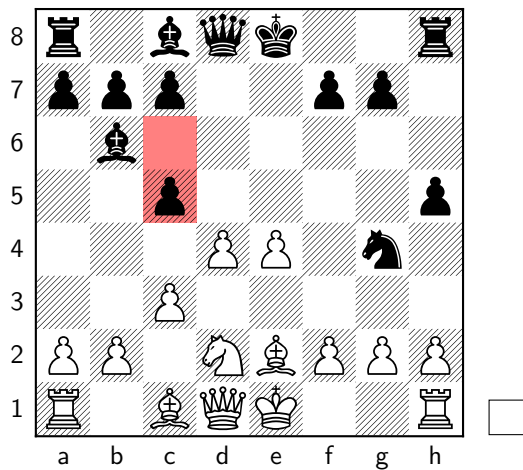
8... ♖g4



9 d4



9... c5



9 d4

1. 9... ♖h4 10 g3

1.1. 10... ♖f6 11 ♘f3 h4 12 gxh4

1.1.1. 12... ♖xh4 13 ♘g5

1.1.2. 12... ♖e7 13 h3 ♘f6 14 e5

1.2. 10... ♖h3 11 ♘f1

1.3. 10... ♖e7 11 a4 a5 12 ♘c4

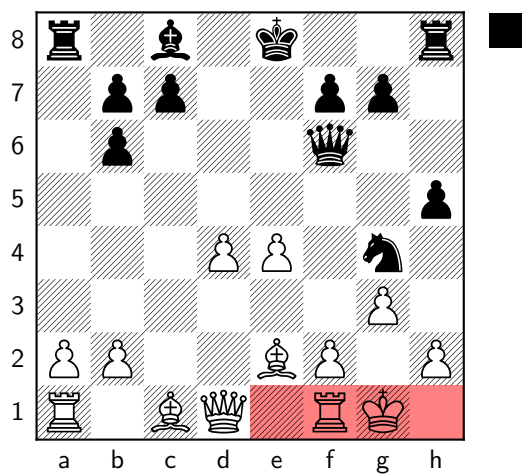
1.3.1. 12... ♘f6

1.3.2. 12... ♖xe4 13 f3 ♖d5 14 ♘xb6 cxb6
15 c4 ♖d6 16 f×g4

c5 is a logical break for black in this position. The idea is to undouble the pawns and re-open the diagonal for the bishop.

10 ♖c4 cxd4 11 ♗xb6 axb6 12 cxd4 ♔h4 13 g3
 ♕f6 14 O-O

This position should be much better for white but objectively black still has a bit of pressure.

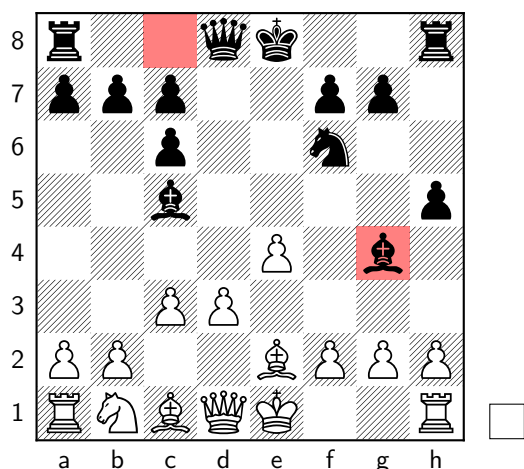




Chapter 17

Stafford Gambit: Stafford Gambit : Hafu Variation (Refutation) : 5. d3 Bc5 6. Be2 h5 7. c3 Bg4

1 e4 e5 2 d3 f3 3 dxe5 dxc6 4 dxc6 dxc6 5 d3
c5 6 Be2 h5 7 c3 Bg4



This sets up a little trap

7... Bg4 This sets up a little trap

1. 8 Bxg4 Playable but we prefer not to open the h file

8... hxg4

2. 8 d4

2.1. 8... dxe4

2.1.1. 9 Bxg4 hxg4 10 Qe2 Qe7 11 dxc5

2.1.2. 9 dxc5 Qxd1+ 10 Bxd1 Bxd1

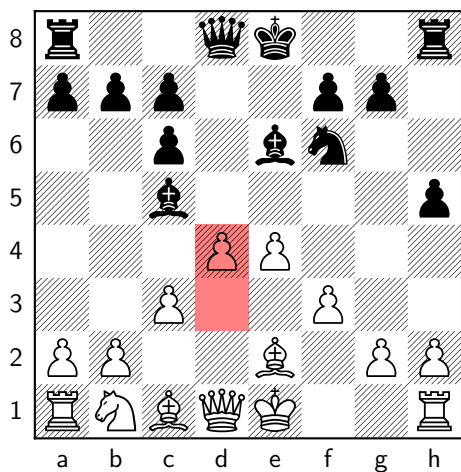
2.1.2.1. 11 f3 Bxf3 12 gxf3 dxc5 13 O-O

2.1.2.2. 11 Qxd1 dxf2+

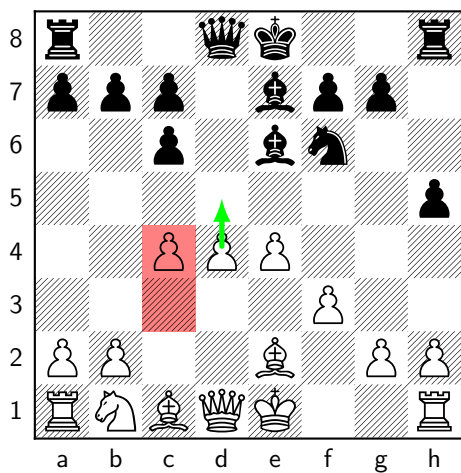
2.2. 8... Bxe2 This is supposed to be the best move here

9 Qxe2 Be7 10 O-O

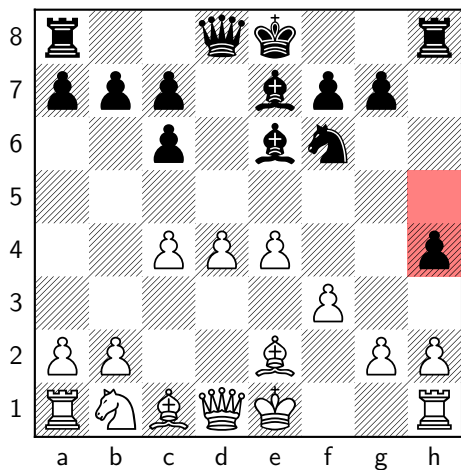
8 f3 ♖e6 9 d4



9... ♖e7 10 c4



10... h4



Black is getting pushed back

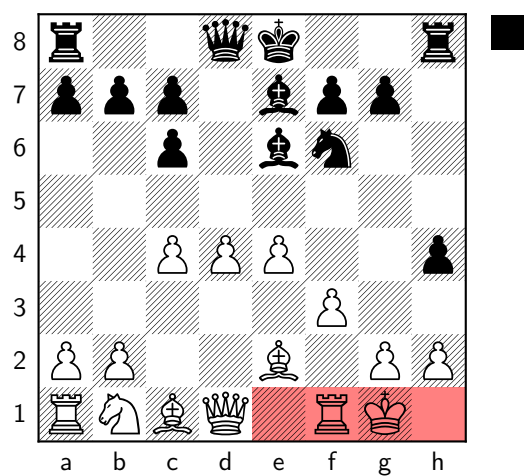
The idea here is that Black cannot put their queen on d7 to long castle. Black is just getting squeezed
 10 c4 The idea here is that Black cannot put their queen on d7 to long castle. Black is just getting squeezed

1. 10... O-O 11 O-O

2. 10... ♖d7 11 d5

Black tries to push the h pawn to weaken White's king-side.

11 O-O



11 O-O

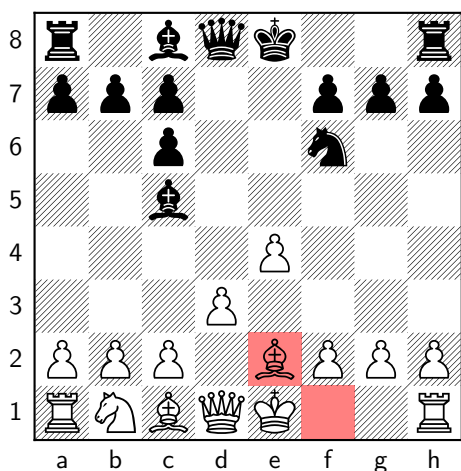
1. 11...h3 12 g3



Chapter 18

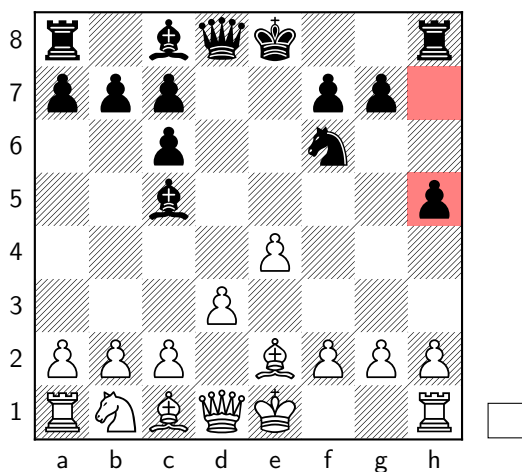
Stafford Gambit: Stafford Gambit : Magic line (can it be defeated ?) 5. d3 Bc5 6 Be2 h5 7. c3 Ng4

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘f6 3 ♘xe5 ♘c6 4 ♘xc6 dxc6 5 d3
 ♙c5 6 ♙e2

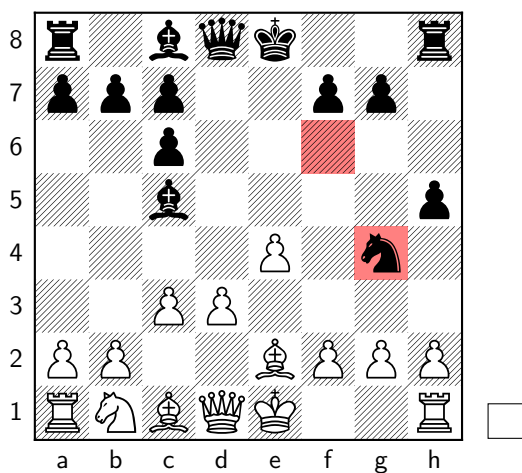


This variation is called the hafu variation and is supposed to be the best way to fight against the stafford. I covered it in another chapter but since then new ideas for black have appeared.

6... h5



7 c3 ♘g4



6... h5

1. 7 h3 Maybe not the best move but at least it prevents Black from going Knight to g4

7... ♖d4

1.1. 8 O-O ♘g4 9 h×g4 h×g4 10 g3 ♗h3 11 ♖g2 ♗e5

1.1.1. 12 ♗h1

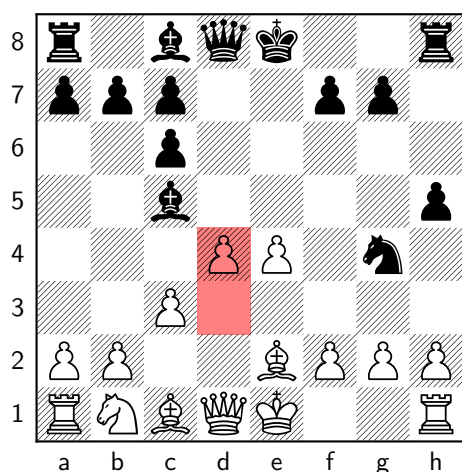
1.1.2. 12 ♗f4

- 1.2. 8 ♗f1 Here we can play Rook to f1 with the idea of castling queen-side

7 ♘c3 ♘g4 8 ♗×g4 h×g4 9 ♗f4 ♗e6 10 ♗d2 ♗h5 11 O-O-O ♗e7 12 d4 O-O-O

This line was used by Jonathan Schrantz to defeat the stockfish engine of Lichess. Since then this has become a popular line. This is my attempt at refuting it. Instead of retreating the bishop we keep going forward by putting the Knight on g4. This is a High risk high reward kind of situation where black has to keep creating threats and advancing regardless of how much pieces he loses. If white manages to stop Black initiative they should win on the spot. But in a blitz game this could be extremely dangerous.

8 d4



8 d4

2. 8...♖b6 If they go back with the bishop White shouldn't have any trouble.

9 h3 ♘f6 10 a4 White lunges forward with a4 to try to punish the poor placement of this bishop

10...a5 11 ♖g5 We threatens to win the pinned knight

1.1. 11...♞d7 12 ♘d2 Bringing our last minor piece into the game

1.1.1. 12...♘h7

13 ♖e3

1.1.1.1. 13...♞e7

14 O-O This position

14...♖d7 15 ♜e1 g5 16 ♖xh5 O-O-O 17 ♖g4 White will have to defend this position

1.1.1.2. 13...g5

1.1.2. 12...♖xh5 A desperate move. This bishop is dead on b6 so they sacrifice it to try to open lines. White has to be careful about fishing pole traps.

13 cxd4 ♞xd4

14 ♞c2 Defending the pawn we will then bring back the bishop on e3

14...♖e6 15 ♖e3

1.1.2.1. 15...♞d6

16 f4 Threatens e5 forking two piece and taking some space in the center

16...♞d7 17 f5

1.1.2.2. 15...♞d7 16 O-O

1.1.2.2.1. 16...O-O

1.1.2.2.2. 16...♘g4 17 h×g4 h×g4 18 g3 g3 makes room for the king and stops the white queen from coming to g3.

18...O-O-O 19 ♖g2 ♜h3 20 ♜h1 White controls the h file. Now more threats here.

1.2. 11...♖e6 12 e5

8...♖d6 Here we just push back the opponnent.

9 e5 ♖e7 10 h3 ♘h6 11 ♘d2 Bringing our Knight into the game. This knight might go to e4 latter on.

11...♖e6 12 O-O

2. 2.1. 12...♞d7 13 ♘e4 O-O-O 14 ♖xh5

2.2. 12...♘f5 13 ♘e4 ♘h4 14 ♜e1 ♞d5 15 ♖f1

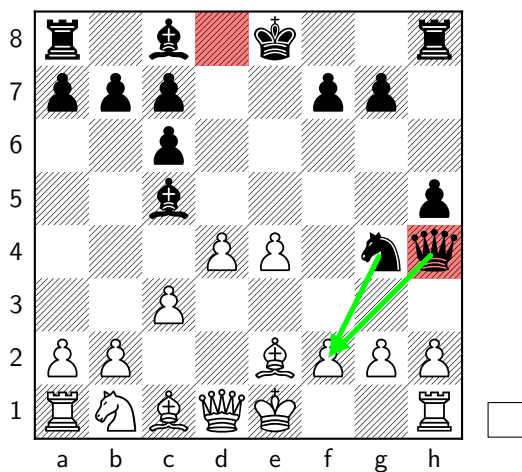
3. 8...♞f6 9 ♖xg4 ♖xg4 10 f3

3.1. 10...♖d6 11 f×g4 ♞h4+ In this line white gets a piece but the king is forced to run. We should be able to find a safe spot on c2

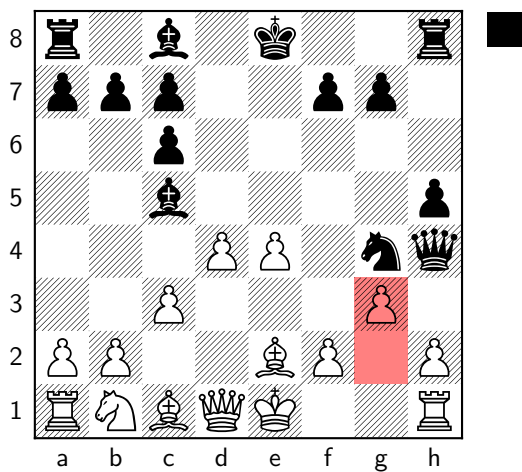
12 ♘d2

12...O-O-O 13 ♖c2 h×g4 14 ♘a3 We

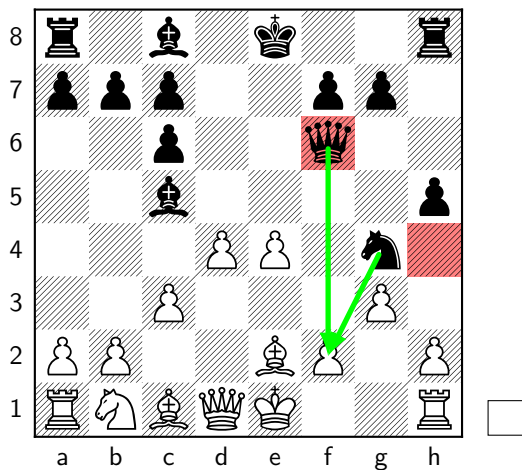
8... ♖h4



9 g3



9... ♖f6

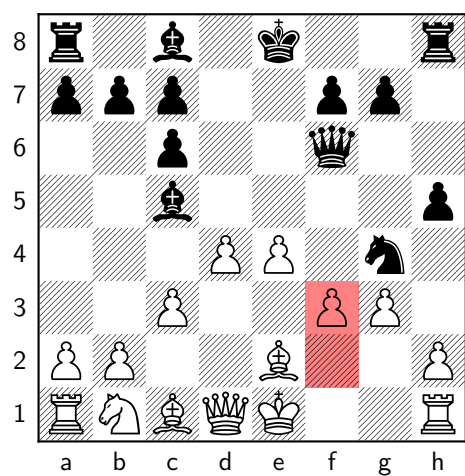


This leads to a double sacrifice. It's very dangerous for white. Lesser version of Stockfish have a hard time evaluating this position but in theory it should still be good for white if white can survive the next 10-15 moves

Of course here black threatens to take on f2, we stop it with g3

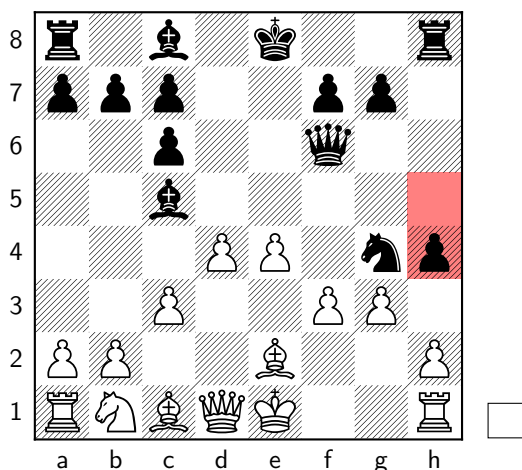
Renewing the threat

10 f3



It appears white is going to win material. But black can play an incredible move here

10...h4



A brilliant sacrifice even though it shouldn't work with perfect play it's incredibly dangerous. Here white cannot take either the knight or the bishop without giving black massive counterplay.

10...h4 A brilliant sacrifice even though it shouldn't work with perfect play it's incredibly dangerous. Here white cannot take either the knight or the bishop without giving black massive counterplay.

1. **11 ♖f4** At first thought that 11. Bf4 would win a piece while stopping Black's counterplay but g5 is a problem

1.1. **11...g5**

1.1.1. **12 f×g4 g×f4 13 g×f4**

1.1.1.1. **13...♖b6** This is supposed to be winning for white thanks to the two extra pawns and the space advantage.

1.1.1.2. **13...♖e7**

1.1.2. **12 ♖×c7**

1.1.2.1. **12...♖e6 13 d×c5 h×g3**

1.1.2.1.1. **14 f×g4**

1.1.2.1.2. **14 ♖×g3**

1.1.2.2. **12...♖b6 13 ♖×b6 h×g3 14 ♖c7 ♖f2**

1.2. **11...h×g3 12 ♖×g3**

1.2.1. **12...♖d6**

1.2.1.1. **13 e5 ♖×e5 14 d×e5 ♖×e5 15 ♖×e5 ♖×e5 16 ♖d4 ♖×d4 17 c×d4**

1.2.1.2. **13 f×g4 ♖×g3+**

1.2.2. **12...♖e3 13 ♖d2**

1.2.2.1. **13...♖g2+ 14 ♖f2 ♖h3 15 d×c5 ♖d8 16 ♖c1 g5**

1.2.2.2. **13...♖f5 14 e×f5 ♖d6 15 ♖e3+ ♖f8 16 ♖f1 ♖×f5 17 ♖d2 ♖e8 18 ♖e4 ♖e6**

1.2.2.2.1. **19 ♖d2**

1.2.2.2.2. **19 O-O-O ♖×a2 20 ♖×d6+ c×d6**

11 d×c5 Taking the bishop is wrong

11...h×g3 After this White is almost completely paralysed despite being up a piece.

2. 2.1. **12 ♖d4** Attempting to trade queen to temper the attack and also give the king some space

12...♖h4 Of course Black must decline the trade

13 ♖d2 Getting out of the discovery

13...♖f2 14 ♖f1 g×h2

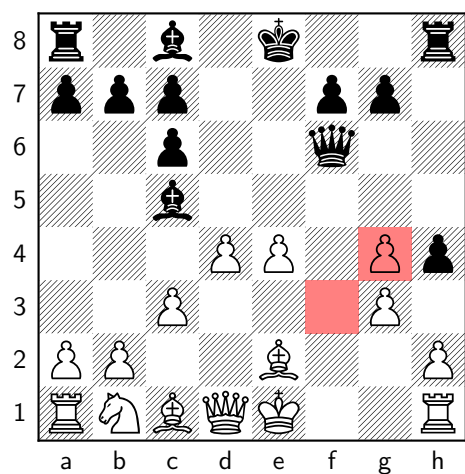
- 2.1.1. **15 ♖c2 h1♖ 16 ♖×h1 ♖×h1** Black is up an exchange, has a lot of activity while White position has completely crumbled.

2.1.1.1. **17 ♖g5 f6**

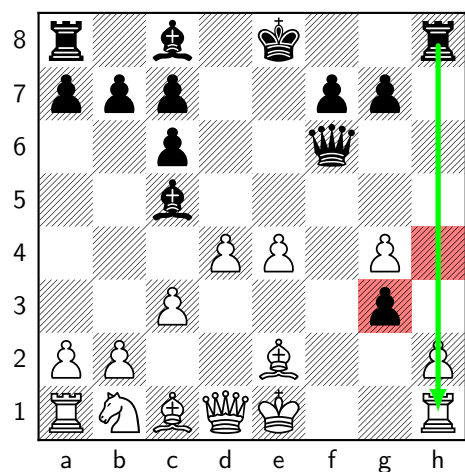
2.1.1.1.1. **18 ♖e3 ♖h3**

2.1.1.1.2. **19 ♖f4**

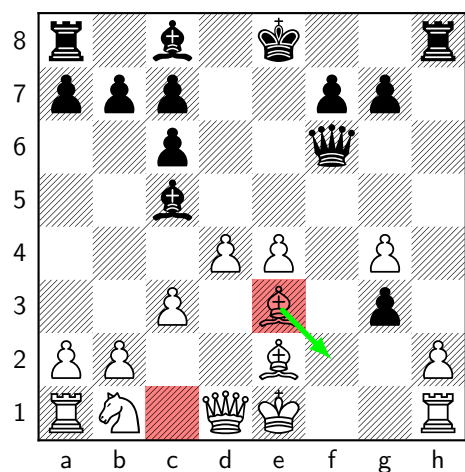
11 f×g4



11... h×g3



12 ♖e3



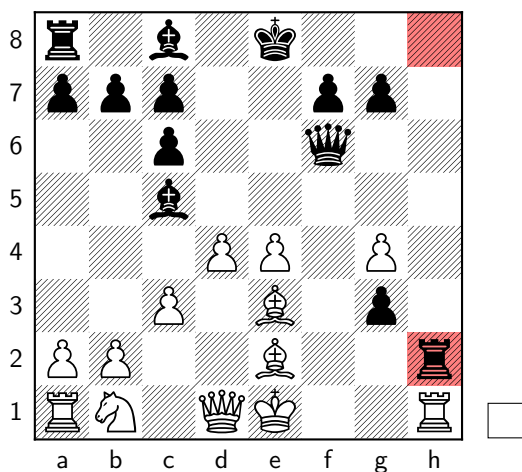
It is possible to capture the knight but a complicated tactical mess will ensue with practical chances for black even though the evaluation is heavily in white favor. Beside that's the line in which Jonathan Schrantz drew Stockfish.

Making use of the pin and threatening Qf2

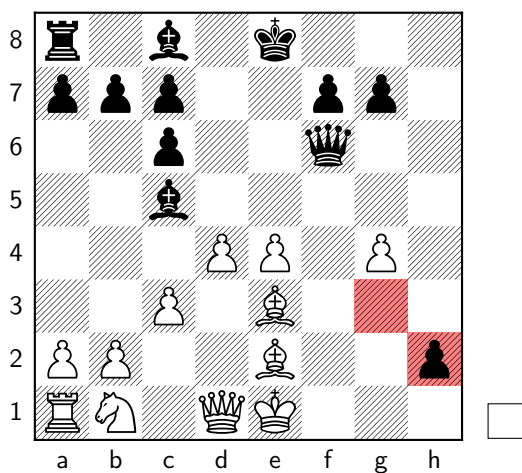
12 ♕e3

1. 12... g2 13 ♖g1 ♖×h2 14 g5
2. 12... g×h2 13 d×c5 ♕e5 14 ♘d2

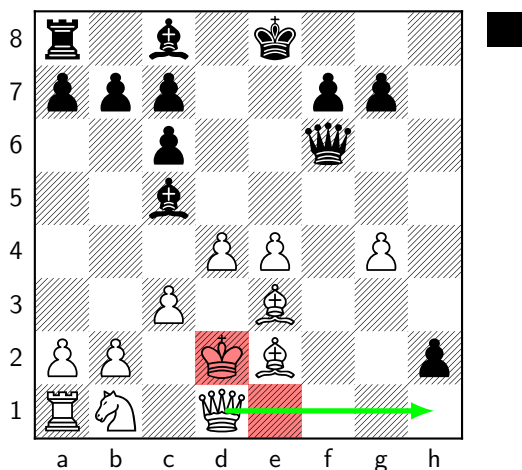
12... ♖xh2



13 ♖xh2 gxh2



14 ♔d2



12... ♖xh2

1. 13 ♖g1 For some reason computer prefers not to take. I think it's too risky to let black's rook live and that white should take on h2 since we can stop the pawn without too much difficulties.

1.1. 13... ♔h4

1.1.1. 14 ♘d2

1.1.2. 14 dxc5 ♖h1 15 ♔d2 g2 16 ♔c2

1.2. 13... ♔f2+ 14 ♔xf2 gxf2+ 15 ♔d2

1.3. 13... ♔e7 14 ♖xg3

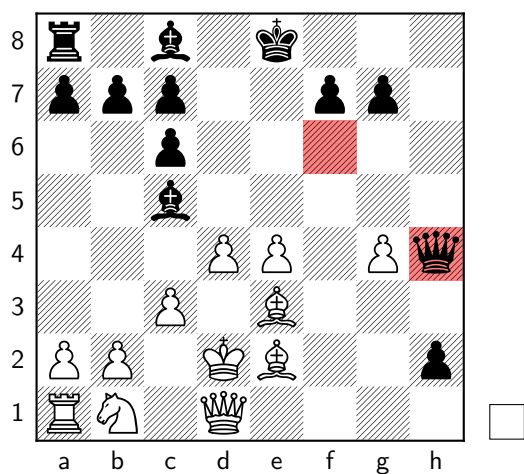
13... gxh2

1. 14 dxc5 h1♔+

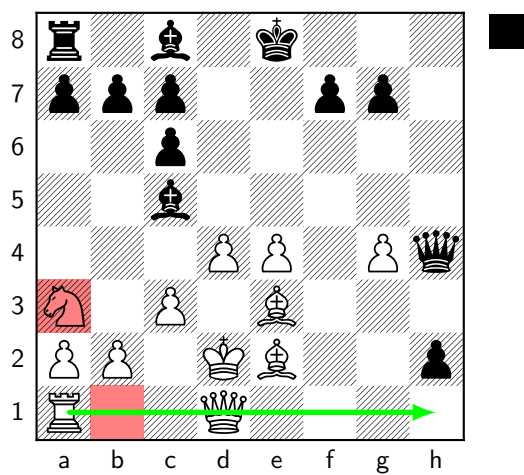
2. 14 ♔f3 ♔xg4

Kd2 is forced

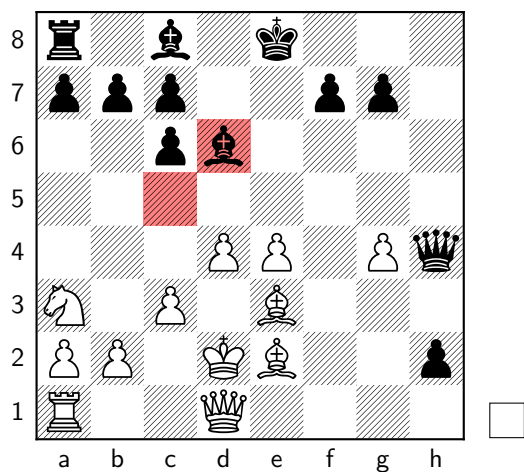
14... ♖h4



15 ♖a3



15... ♗d6



14... ♖h4

1. 15 ♗f3 ♗xg4 16 ♖a3 ♗xf3 17 ♖xf3

1.1. 17... ♗d6

1.2. 17... ♗xa3 18 bxa3 O-O-O 19 ♖h1 ♖e8
20 ♗d3

Second forced move, after that White should get out of the complications unscathed.

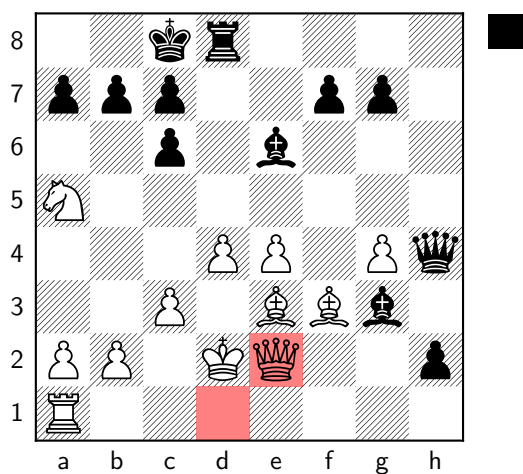
15... ♗d6

1. 16 e5 ♗xe5 17 dxe5 ♗e6 18 ♖c2 ♖d8

1.1. 19 ♗d4 c5 20 ♖b5 cxd4 21 ♖xc7+ ♖e7
22 ♖xe6 fxe6

1.2. 19 ♗d3

16 ♖c4 ♗g3 17 ♗f3 ♗e6 18 ♖a5 O-O-O 19 ♕e2



If need be White can put their queen or their rook on h1 to stop the pawn. This is probably still a little awkward but White should be winning here.



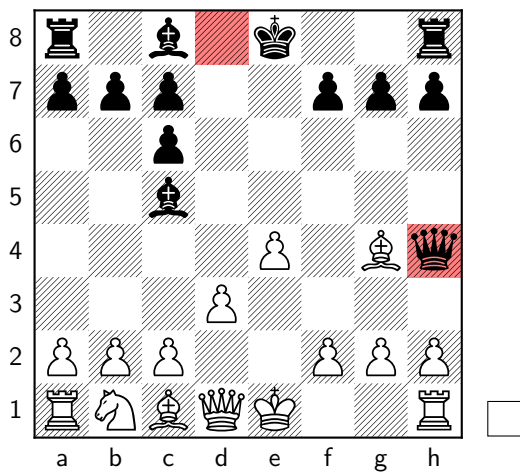
Chapter 19

Stafford Gambit: Stafford Gambit : 5. d3 Bc5 6. Be2 Ng4

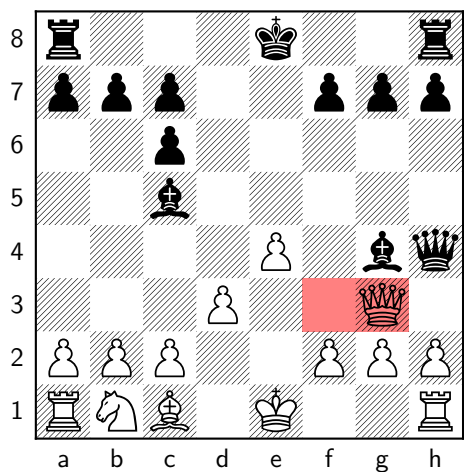
1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘f6 3 ♘xe5 ♘c6 4 ♘xc6 dxc6 5 d3
♙c5 6 ♙e2 ♘g4 7 ♙xg4 ♚h4

7... ♚h4

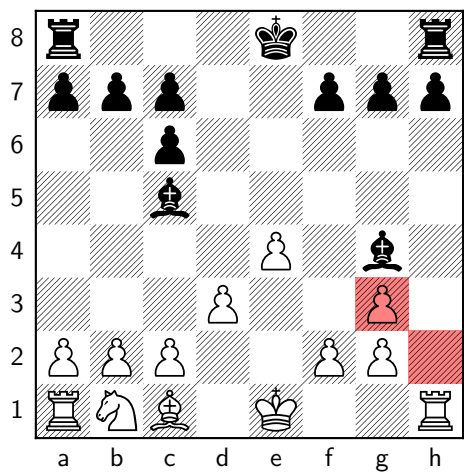
1. 8 O-O ♙xg4 9 ♚e1



8 ♖f3 ♗xg4 9 ♖g3



9... ♖xg3 10 h×g3



9 ♖g3

1. 9... ♖h5

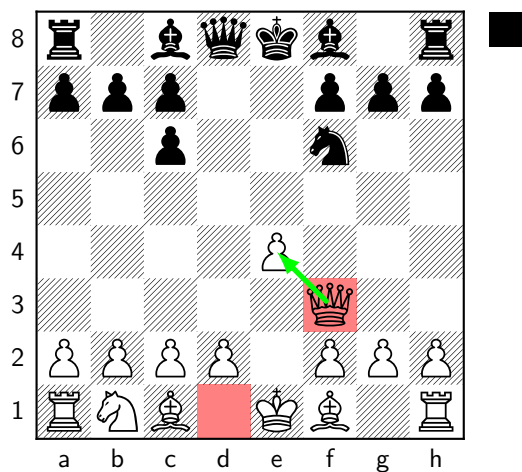
Black is still down a pawn but they have the bishop pair and better development while white has double g pawns. I believe this position offers practical chances for the black side.



Chapter 20

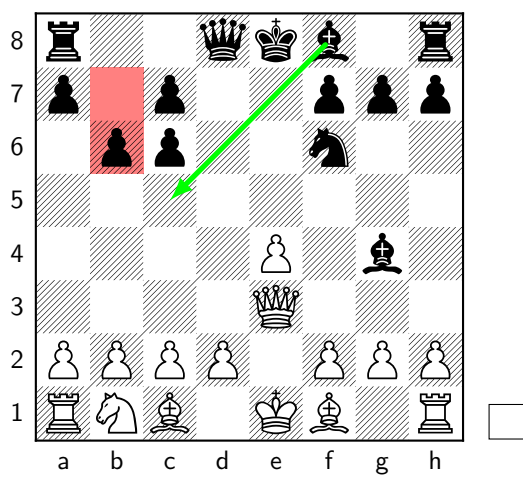
Stafford Gambit: Stafford Gambit : 5 Qf3

1 e4 e5 2 d3 f6 3 exf6 c6 4 dxc6 dxc6 5 Qf3



This is actually a pretty interesting way to face the Stafford. The idea is to place the queen on e3 and to hold everything and maybe castle long in the future. But the queen can also be a target in this variation.

5... ♘g4 6 ♔e3 b6



6... b6

1. 7 c3 ♘d6 8 e5 O-O [

1.1. 9 exd6

1.1.1. 9... ♖e8

1.1.2. 9... ♘d5

1.2. 9 exf6 ♖e8

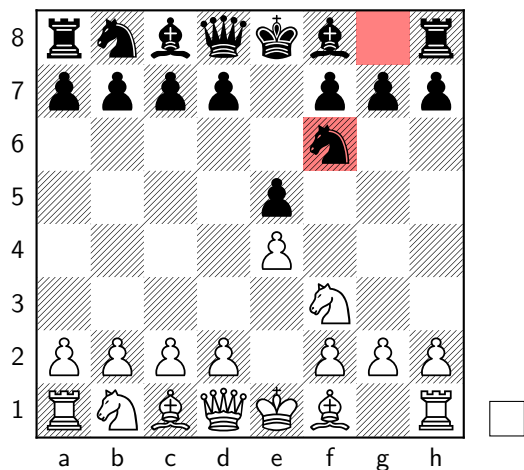
1.3. 9 f3 ♘h5 10 d4 ♘d5



Chapter 21

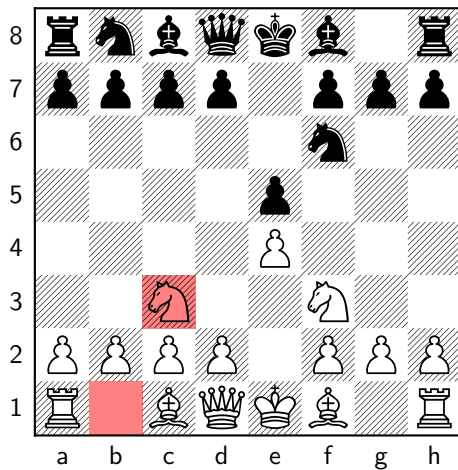
Stafford Gambit: Stafford Declined : Three Knights 3. Nc3 Nc6

1 e4 e5 2 ♘f3 ♘f6

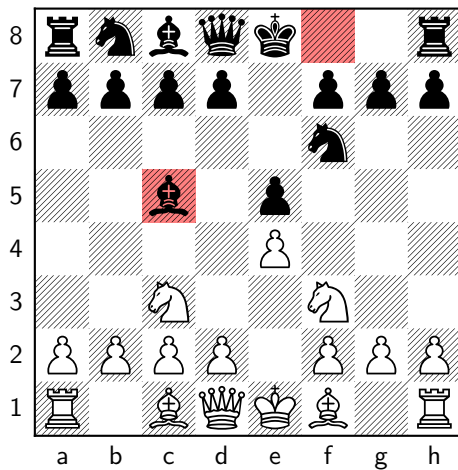


One of the drawback of the stafford is that white has to take the e5 pawn to enter it.

3 ♘c3



3... ♗c5



Here with white there are many people will prefer not to take the pawn, either to avoid the stafford or because they aren't familiar with the Petroff and would rather try to transpose to an italian or a spanish.

3 ♘c3 Here with white there are many people will prefer not to take the pawn, either to avoid the stafford or because they aren't familiar with the Petroff and would rather try to transpose to an italian or a spanish.

1. **3... ♘c6** The theoretically approved move here is to transpose to a four knight. This is a different opening which deserves a study of its own. However it can be tricky for white

1.1. **4 ♗c4** This move for example is dubious

4... ♘xe4 5 ♘xe4 d5 6 ♗d3

1.1.1. **6... dxe4 7 ♗xe4 ♗d6**

1.1.2. **6... f5 7 ♘c3 e4**

- 1.2. **4 d4** The problem is that this can also end up being a scotch which is probably not what Stafford players are aiming for.

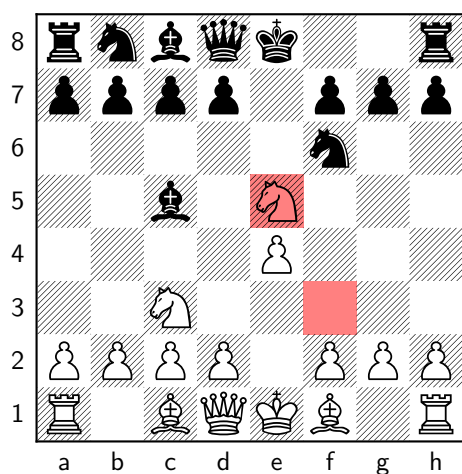
3... ♗b4 4 ♘xe5 O-O 5 ♗e2

We can try to transpose to a Stafford by playing Bc5

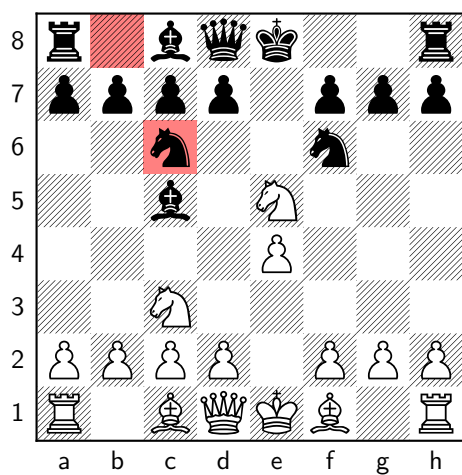
3... ♗c5 We can try to transpose to a Stafford by playing Bc5

2. **4 ♗c4** Funnily enough most people will persist on declining the gambit

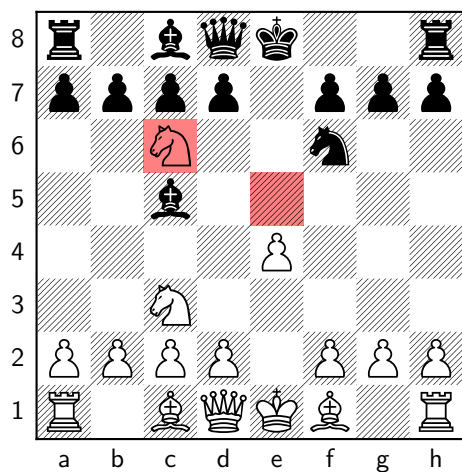
4 ♖xe5



4... ♖c6



5 ♖xc6



Taking the free pawn is best. In this line Black won't be able to recapture the e pawn like in the normal Petroff. However we can enter the stafford from this position

4... ♖c6

1. 5 ♖f3 Here they can drop the knight back

5... ♜e7

1.1. 6 d4 ♜b4 7 ♜d3 ♖xe4 8 O-O ♖xc3 9 bxc3 ♜xc3 10 ♜b1 Just an illustrative line given by the computer. Here we can see that Black has regained the pawn they gambitted but at the cost of giving white a lot of initiative.

1.2. 6 d3

5 ♖d3 Also an interesting option

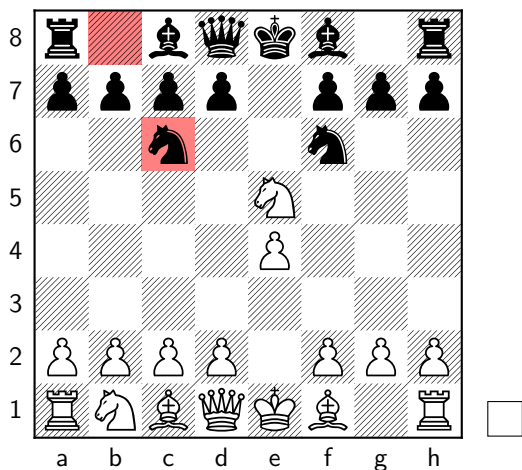
If they take the Knight this makes us happy because we transpose to a Stafford however...



Chapter 22

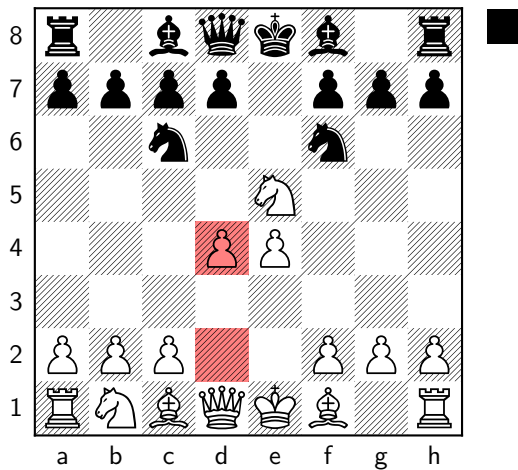
Stafford Gambit: Stafford Declined : 3. Nxe5 Nc6 4. d4!?

1 e4 e5 2 Nf3 Nf6 3 Nxe5 Nc6

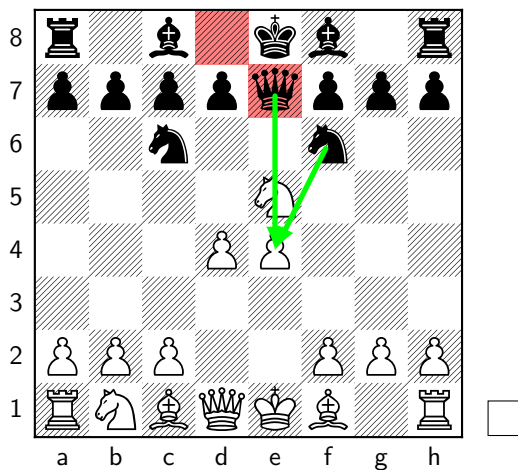


In this position the best move for white is to accept the gambit. But sometimes white may decide not to take the knight and to decline the gambit instead. The two main ways to do it is to either play d4 or to bring back the knight to f3.

4 d4



4... ♖e7



In this chapter we take a look at d4

4 d4 In this chapter we take a look at d4

2. 4... ♖xe4 5 ♖e2 The threat of a discovered check is extremely unpleasant to deal with. If black moves the Knight they will lose the queen after Nxc6+ [

1.1. 5... d5 6 ♖xc6 bxc6 7 f3

1.2. 5... ♖h4

6 g3 ♖e7 7 ♖xe4 d6 8 ♖c3 dxe5 9 ♖d5

1.2.1. 9... ♖d8 10 dxe5

1.2.2. 9... f5 10 ♖xe7 fxe4 11 ♖xc6 bxc6 12 dxe5

4... ♖xe5 5 dxe5 ♖xe4 6 ♖e2 ♖c5 7 ♖c3 And white gets a nice lead in development and a comfortable position

And that position it's actually best not to take the pawn on e4 right away but to play the intermediate move Qe7! 4... ♖e7 And that position it's actually best not to take the pawn on e4 right away but to play the intermediate move Qe7!

2. 5 ♖c3 ♖xe5 6 dxe5 ♖xe5 [

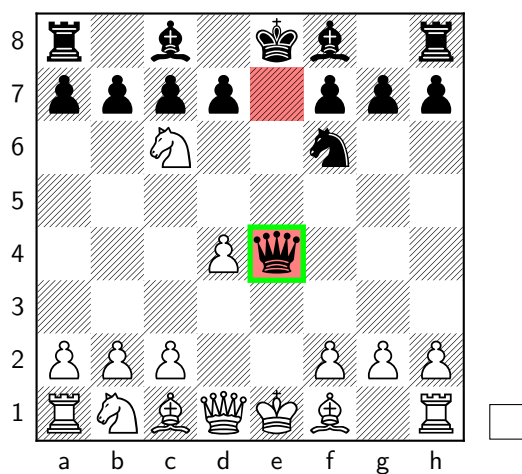
1.1. 7 f4 ♖e6 8 e5 ♖b4

1.2. 7 ♖d3 ♖b4 [

1.2.1. 8 O-O ♖xc3 9 bxc3

1.2.2. 8 ♖d2 d5

5 ♖xc6 ♔xe4+



No matter how they block the check from here all variations offer good chances for black.

5... ♔xe4+ No matter how they block the check from here all variations offer good chances for black.

1. 6 ♖e2 dxc6 Opening the diagonals for both bishops

7 O-O

1.1. 7... ♖d6

1.2. 7... ♖e6

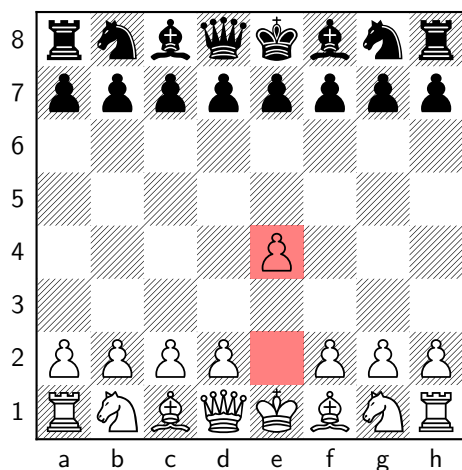
6 ♖e3 dxc6 7 ♖c3 ♖b4



Chapter 23

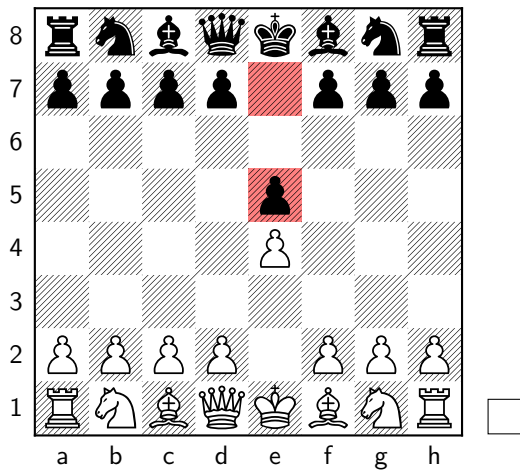
Stafford Gambit: Reverse Stafford Gambit (sort of)

1 e4

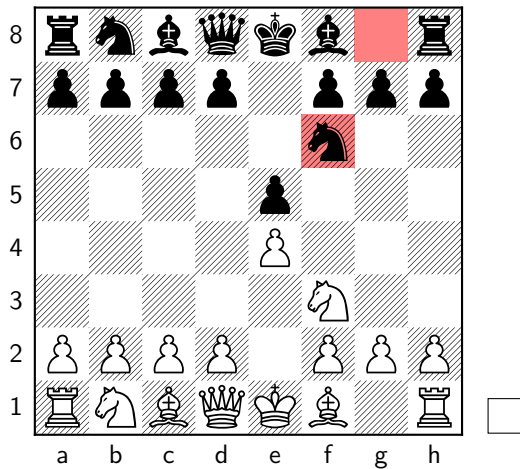


Now you might wonder : is there a way to play the stafford with the white pieces? Well actually there is ! You can play the stafford with white and a better version even !

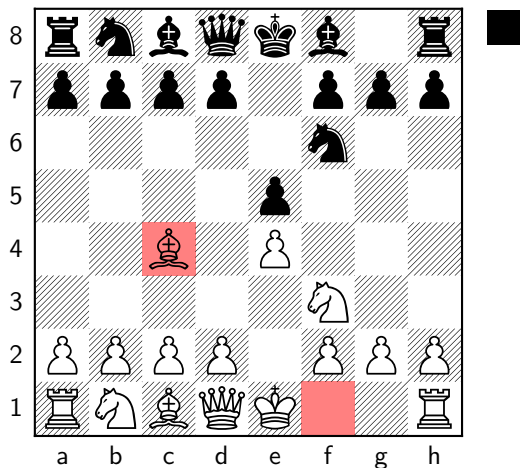
1... e5



2 ♘f3 ♘f6



3 ♙c4



1... e5

2. 2 ♙c4 You can increase your chances of getting the Boden-Kieseritzky Gambit by playing the Bishop opening (a e4 e5 sideline by the way, especially if like gambits).

2... ♘f6 The main line of the Bishop opening goes Nf6

3 ♘f3 But after Nf3 we have a direct transposition to the Boden-Kieseritzky Gambit !

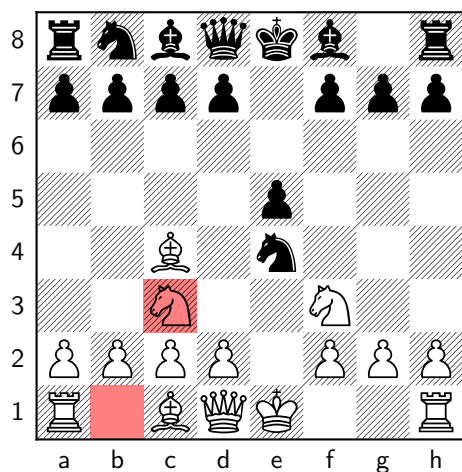
3... ♙xe4

4 ♘c3

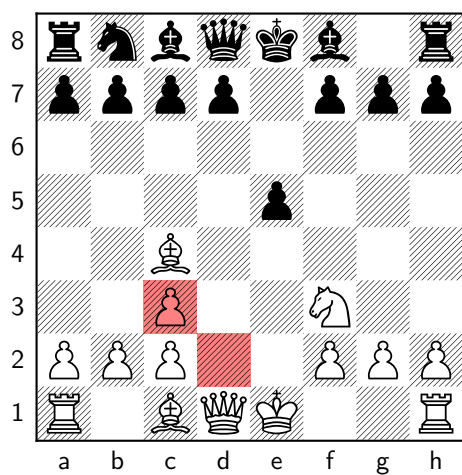
This reverse stafford Gambit is called Boden-Kieseritzky Gambit and it also occurs in the Petroff defense ! But you can also get it through the bishop opening

Lichess flags this as a line from the Urusov Gambit which is another tricky and dangerous opening. If you enjoy the stafford with black this is definitely something you should take a look at

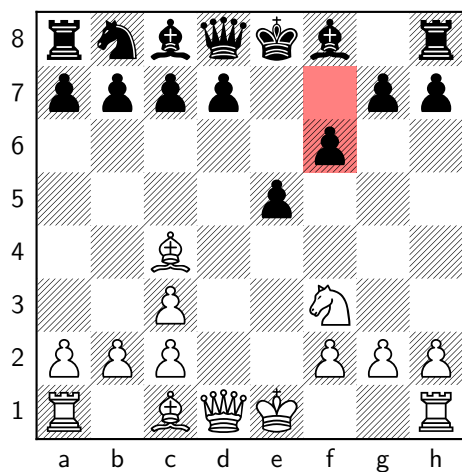
3... ♖xe4 4 ♖c3



4... ♖xc3 5 dxc3



5... f6



This leads to a reverse Stafford Gambit

5 dxc3

1. 5... d6 6 ♖g5 ♗e6 7 ♗xe6 fxe6 8 ♖f3

1.1. 8... ♗e7

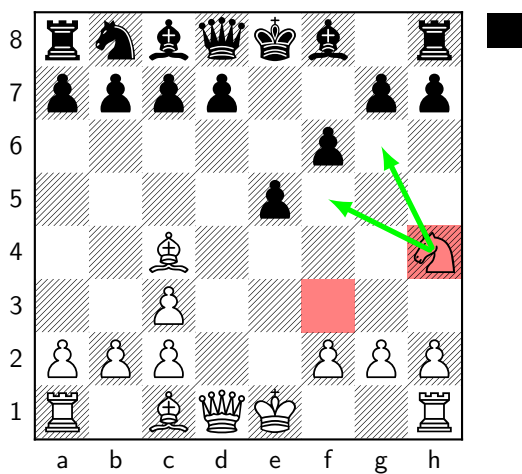
1.1.1. 9 ♖f7+ ♔d7 10 ♖xe6+ ♔e8

1.1.2. 9 ♖xb7 ♗xg5

1.2. 8... ♖e7 9 ♖xb7

f6 prevents Ng5 and protects the pawn. This is essentially the only move Black has to try to refute our gambit.

6 ♖h4



White best try to attempt tricking black.